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THE FOURSQUARE CHRISTIAN



WHALLON

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THE
Foursquare Christian

OR

The Fourfold Doctrine of the First
and Great Commandment.

*Edward
Whallon* BY
REV. E. P. WHALLON, PH. D., D.D.

“Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with
all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with
all thy mind, and with all thy strength,”—
Mark xii; 30.

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PREFACE.

The Christian life is the best and happiest that can be lived on earth. It is the life to which God calls us. It is that which Christ makes possible to us by his death, and into which the Holy Spirit brings us, if we accept the divine grace offered us in the Gospel. The Christian accepts the truth as it is in Jesus. He finds spiritual and eternal life through trusting in Jesus. He follows the example set by Jesus, and finds this the one sure and safe path through life. The Christian is trustful and tranquil; loving and loyal; thoughtful and thankful; helpful and hopeful. He makes the most of this world by trying to do the wil of God as long as he lives here. He makes the most of the next world by accepting from God's hand the free gift of eternal life through Jesus Christ the Lord. He has promise of the life that row is and of that which is to come. Of all possible ways of living, this is highest, holiest, happiest and best. This life is to be not one-sided, but complete, symmetrical, developed in each department, foursquare in experlence, worship, belief and service.

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THE CHRISTIAN LIFE.

If a thoughtful and devout student of God's Word were asked what is necessary in order to become a Christian, he would promptly answer that one must have a personal experience of the saving grace of God, that he must be born again by the Holy Spirit, that he must have a sincere faith in and love for Jesus Christ. This would be Scriptural and forceful, putting first things first and emphasizing the very truths taught to us by Christ in the Gospels. This lays the stress where we are taught in the Word of God to lay it. Whatever one is or is not, whatever he has or has not, whatever he does or does not, he is not a Christian unless he has been converted and has personally entered the kingdom of God. Except he be thus born again, or born from on high, so that he has the personal experience of a renewed and loving heart, he is, according to Christ's own teachings, outside the boundary lines of salvation. Without doubt he who would be a Christian must love and trust Christ as his own Savior. The Christian is one who loves God with his heart.

But there is another side to the life of the Christian. He will worship God devoutly. He will use the ordained means of grace through which the divine life and blessing may be communicated to his soul. He will come close to God, day by day, coming into personal contact with him in prayer. He will read God's Word that he may learn his will. He will commune with God that his Spirit may guide him into the ways of spiritual life. He will attend God's house and listen reverently to the preaching of the truth and will engage in all the ordinances of public worship. He will confess Christ publicly, will receive baptism, and will come humbly to the Lord's Supper. He will delight in all the exercises, public and private, in which God may be worshiped. His life will be full of expressed reverence and he will be known as a worshiper of God. It is possible for one to have a zeal for the externals of religion without the inner grace of heart and life which they are means to express and to help. In such a case one is a formalist instead of a Christian. But he who is a true child of God will have the real root of the matter in him. He loves and believes in Christ, and loves and believes the truth, and he will love the Church and all that the

Church stands for, and will be known as an openly avowed follower of Christ. With his whole soul, in spirit and in truth, he will worship. The Christian is one who loves God with his soul.

But there is a further side to the life of the Christian. He will receive the truth. He will accept the teachings of the divine Word of God. He will believe the doctrines of the Gospel. He will know the truth, and the truth will make him free. He will worship God in truth as well as in spirit. He will take God's truth into his soul, and the Holy Spirit will use it for his sanctification. The Christian will have a reverent regard for sound doctrine. He will hold the form of sound words. He will take God's Word as the inspired guide of his life. He will be jealous for the truth of God and will not think that error is as safe and as good as truth. He will not say that it is immaterial what one believes. He will believe what God has revealed, and will not believe or indorse anything that contradicts it. The Christian will be an evangelical believer. He will stand for sound doctrine. If he were this alone, he might be a mere dogmatist. It is possible for one to have a zeal for words and dogmas without a vital interest in Christ. In such

a case theology may be made loveless. But the Christian loves and believes in Christ, and loves and believes the truth. The Christian is one who loves God with his mind.

But there is still another side to the life of the Christian, for his life, like the city John saw in his vision, lieth four-square. He will be a good and upright and moral man in his life. He will obey the commandments of God. He will seek the help of the Holy Spirit day by day to live a consistent life. He will examine himself so that he may not bring reproach on the cause of Christ, or give enemies occasion to blaspheme. He will obey Christ and will serve him. He will be good. He will be moral. He will give. He will be temperate and pure and truthful and honest. He will let his light shine. He will not trust in his own morality, however. He will not be satisfied with his own righteousness. His life, however, will be actually good and upright. If he were this alone, he might be a mere moralist. But he is one who loves and believes in Christ as his own Savior and his only hope, who loves and worships with God's people, who loves and believes the truth, and who loves to do God's will. His life is one of prac-

tical obedience and service. The Christian is one who loves God with his strength.

Here are the four sides of Christian life as laid down in God's Word. They are Personal Experience, Reverent Worship, Evangelical Faith and Obedient Service. As laid down by Moses, and as repeated by Christ, these four elements are to be found in every Christian life. We are to love the Lord our God with all our heart, with all our soul, with all our mind, and with all our strength. We are to remember the order of these injunctions, and we are to put first things first.

THE WHOLE LIFE FOR GOD.

No one should be satisfied with a one-sided or unsymmetrical life. In every part of the being we should seek to glorify God, by being what God would have us be. He who emphasizes some one side or department, leaving the others uncared for or undeveloped, is very imperfect and unsatisfactory.

One can not divide himself into parts after all. Each person is one indivisible being. We may speak of ourselves consisting of body and soul; but as soon as these are separated our earthly existence ceases. Body, soul and spirit make the one being, and we are to glorify God in every part of this unified being, and with the apostle are to pray that our "whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ."

The psychologist may, in his scientific analysis, consider man mentally as consisting of intellect, affections and will. From a scientific standpoint this may be permissible; but as a matter of fact and of life no one may be so divided. The man

thinks, loves and wills. Every intellectual act is some person thinking. Every outgoing of the affections is some person exercising love or hate, or some other feeling. Every act of the will is some person framing a purpose. Sin never existed in the abstract, but has always been the evil act or life of some sinful individual. Righteousness never was found in the abstract, but always in the life or action of some righteous person. So the individual may think and feel and will, but, actually, can not be analyzed into intellect, affections and will.

In seeking to live the good life we must beware that we do not make the vital mistake of thinking to please God by being good in some spot, while the rest of our being is wrong and contrary to his wish. God has no use for a divided life. The real mother before King Solomon cried out against the sword that would divide her babe, for she knew it meant death. We can not serve God and Mammon. We can not cherish sin in any part of our being, and insist that the other parts are all right and that God should be satisfied. Unless we welcome and cherish the divine law of life and love in every part of our being, we refuse it for a part, and in so doing we

choose disease and death for a part of our life. In doing this we choose disease and death for our whole life, for we have voluntarily banished God and his divine life from having full welcome and control.

One man may say that he will live right, but that he has no use for conversion, the church or God's service. No one can live right who chooses to be in such overt rebellion against God.

Another may satisfy himself with an emotional enjoyment of what he calls religion, and yet may have so little regard for the commandments of God as to break them without compunction of conscience, reminding us of Mr. Moody's words that "if a man will not live as he ought, the less he says about Jesus the better."

Another one may pride himself on his absolutely orthodox creed, and yet by an unlovely and cruel and persecuting life may bring religion into the disrepute which it acquired in the Middle Ages, so that we are led to think of the inquisitor as the most diabolical of men.

Another may claim to be filled with such an exalted reverence and love and devotion and joy in religious life that he cares not for sober creed or the old doctrines,

and inveighs against the common and established truths of Christian doctrine. No personal experience which any one claims to possess can give him a right to reject the truths given by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit in the Word of God.

The whole life is to be for God. He who would be a child of God must seek and accept the personal experience of the new birth, must worship God in the ordinances which he has himself established, must believe the truths revealed to us from on high, and must live a life in obedience to the divine commandments. The whole life must be for God. The whole being must be consecrated to, must be indwelt by, and must be lovingly obedient to God.

CHRISTIAN EXPERIENCE.

*“Thou shalt love the Lord thy God
with all thy heart.”—Mark xii. 30.*

* * *

*“With the heart man believeth unto
righteousness.”—Romans x. 10.*

* * *

“Ye must be born again.”—John iii. 7.

* * *

*“Grow in grace and in the knowl-
edge of our Lord and Savior Jesus
Christ.”—2 Peter iii. 18.*

THE SPIRIT AND THE BRIDE.

God is calling men and women to a saved life. This call comes externally and internally. Both of these calls are important and essential. The voice of God may reach the heart, and a longing and readiness for help and guidance may be felt within; but there needs to be the voice from without by which the truth may be taught and the way be made plain.

God called the Ethiopian eunuch when he put in his heart a readiness to read the words of the prophet Isaiah, and made him willing to know more about Christ and the way of salvation. But he might have gone on in darkness and ignorance if Philip had not been sent to him to make clear and plain to him the way to find Christ. When the instructions and invitations of the evangelist came to him, he received his second, or external call. In this form the Bride, or the Church, with its holy ordinances, said "Come" to him, and the eunuch responded to both calls and gave himself to God in conversion and in baptism. No wonder he went on his way rejoicing.

God is calling every one to-day in our Christian land in one or the other, or in both of these ways. It is the duty of the Church to see that the call is unmistakably clear and plain, so that each person may be thrown upon his personal responsibility to heed and to obey the call that comes to the heart. We must not make mistakes here.

As Christian people, members of the Church of Christ, we should make sure that, in some way, at least once, plainly and distinctly, the external call should be made to each individual soul in the whole community where we live. We take it for granted that people know it to be their duty to be Christians. They live in a land of Bibles and churches. The church-bells ring. Sabbath services are regularly held. The Gospel is preached. It would seem that none can fail to know the claims of God and the offers of life through Jesus Christ. But the human heart is very deceitful, and the suggestions of Satan are very plausible. Each person should be approached personally and positively with the earnest invitation and demand, in the name of Christ, that sin be repented of, and Christ accepted and confessed as Sav-

ior. We should not be satisfied, as ministers or private Christians, until we are absolutely sure that every person in our community has been thus approached.

We must be certain, too, that the Gospel, and not something else, is preached. It will not do to confine ourselves to Christian ethics, or Christian doctrine, or even that which is edifying to Christian people. There must be the frequent call to the unconverted in the sermons preached on the Sabbath in our sanctuaries. In fact, there is a general agreement among the best preachers and teachers that in every sermon there should be enough, under God, to save the soul of any unconverted one who may be present and may give heed to the Word as preached. Thus, in every public service, the Bride of Christ must be always ready and always sure to give the invitation to eternal life.

But the efficient influence is that internal call that comes from God's Holy Spirit to the heart. Without this the other is unavailing. There can be no real revival that is simply human-made. The conversions that are effected by mere human influences lack the divine element which alone is availing to salvation. There are

spurious conversions, but they are all of them those in which God's Spirit had no share. We continually are led to realize our need of him for all that is real and abiding in spiritual life. Without him we can do nothing. The Church's continual dependence must be on the Holy Spirit. The invitation of the Bride must be given continually, lovingly and earnestly; but without the call of the Spirit her words will be unavailing. But let the Church be most careful that wherever the voice of God is heard in any human heart, her own voice shall follow up the invitation with loving and earnest insistence.

GOD'S CALL TO SALVATION.

The call of God to the saved life is so plain that it may be understood and obeyed by the young, the simple and the unlearned as well as by those who are experienced and cultured. The child may hear and heed it as readily as those of mature life. The peasant may understand and accept it as easily as the greatest philosopher and sage.

Religion, as a matter of supreme necessity to all, is not beyond the ordinary comprehension and reach. The loving and obedient heart is the prime qualification for those who would have saving relations with God. God makes the Gospel offer in absolute sincerity, and the conditions of acceptance of it are not placed beyond the reach of any to whom it is offered. By putting it thus within the reach of all, does God reveal his appreciation of our weakness, his love, and his deep sincerity. The conditions of salvation are such that they can be accepted by even the smallest, the youngest, and the weakest of those whom he calls.

When God says: "My son, give me thy heart," he does not make a demand for maturity of judgment, ripeness of culture, philosophical acumen, or fully developed powers of thought. He asks for the love of the heart, and this the little child can yield, and oftentimes is more ready and apt to yield than many who are greatly its superiors in knowledge and wisdom. Yet, possessing a loving heart, it may have the best knowledge, which is a knowledge of God and at least the beginning of wisdom, which is the fear of the Lord. There are some who think, however, that the child can not be a Christian. They imagine that one must be mature in life in order to be capable of making an intelligent choice of religious life. when, in reality, none are so far away from a wise choice as those who have come to a fully developed and mature life without having found a place for Christ in their hearts up to that time. God's condition is the loving heart which believes and welcomes and loves and obeys, and to the possession of this, wealth, culture and advanced age are, too often, great and insurmountable obstacles.

Religion is very simple, and it must needs be so, in order to be within the grasp of all who need it. In this respect we are

reminded of the vital, physical functions which are partaken of by all classes and ages and conditions, and for which God gives natural capacity and aptitude to the young just as certainly as to the mature. Thus, breathing, digestion, assimilation, blood-circulation, sight, hearing, feeling and motion are attributes of childhood just as certainly as of manhood, and of the ignorant as truly as of the learned. So, under the guidance of God's Spirit, the child or the unlearned is as thoroughly capable of all that is necessary in order to be saved as is the most mature philosopher.

Here is a great ocean steamer, almost ready for its trip across the Atlantic. Without its aid the great General can no more cross the ocean than can the private soldier; the Admiral than the common sailor; the college President than the preparatory student; the trained athlete than the little child. The steamer makes the passage possible, and without it all are equally helpless. All that is necessary for any one is that he secure a ticket, and go aboard. It is not necessary that he understand all the art of ship-construction, the intricacies of navigation or the science of the application of steam. So, in order to secure all

the benefits of Christ's redemption, it is not necessary that one shall understand the whole problem of the mystery of evil, the exact theory of the atonement, and the best form for the statement of every truth of theology. All that is necessary for salvation is that the heart shall be given to God in simple trust in Jesus Christ, and that the divine grace shall be lovingly accepted.

When God's Word tells us that the things of the Spirit of God are spiritually discerned, we are to depend upon it that this is exactly and literally true. Many people do not comprehend its truth in this matter. Many believe that spiritual things are intellectually discerned, but this is no more true than it is that music can be seen. There must be the simple response of a loving and obedient heart to the loving call of the Heavenly Father. This is within the possibilities of every human heart that is ready to humble itself and open the door for the incoming of the Savior. Each human soul is large enough to be a temple of the Holy Spirit. The soul that lovingly responds to the knock of Jesus at its door, and bids him enter, is the one whose faith has saved it, and who has come into the possession of eternal peace and eternal life.

WHAT IS CONVERSION?

If one does not love God, he is an unsaved sinner, and he will remain unsaved until there comes such a change in him that he does love God. This change is conversion, and, in order to bring it about, God has given us his Son and his Spirit, his Word of Truth, his Providence, his Church and all the means of Grace which we enjoy.

God is unwilling that we should live on in a life which is devoid of love for him. He seeks to win us to himself. In his holy Word he tells us about himself. In Christ he personally reveals himself to us. In his Holy Spirit he pleads with us. In the Church his truth is preached and his invitations are repeated and urged upon our attention. In all the dispensations of his Providence and Grace he comes to us seeking to influence our lives and win us to his love.

Those who yield to his gracious influences and come to love him, know what it means to be converted. They have turned

from the old life. They love God. A change has come to them, the most significant and important that can come to human hearts. However bad they were, or however good they were before, they did not love God. They were strangers to grace. They were among the unsaved.

Some persons know when they were converted. They can tell the very moment and the very place. They know what passage of Scripture, what sermon or what providential dealing of God was used for their conversion. They remember how they were opposed to Christ before this, and the very attitude they took against the truth of the Gospel or the work of the Church. But now this is all in the past. They now adore and trust in the Savior, whom they once rejected. They now love to pray and to read God's Word, and they are grateful for even a humble place in the Church. A great change has come to them. They can say with the blind man whom Christ restored to his sight: "One thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see." They are conscious that a new experience has come to them, and that this experience is one in which they love God. It is a very blessed joy which fills

the heart that knows of such a personal transformation.

But there are other converted persons, who do not know the time and the place when the change in their lives occurred. It has occurred, however, without doubt. They love God most sincerely. They live obediently and lovingly every day of their lives. They are reverent and trustful. It is a joy to them to do God's will, and they worship him and commune with him and love his house and his ways. These persons are undoubtedly converted, for they have all the marks of conversion upon them. These are not the characteristics of the unsaved. Those who are living in a mere state of nature, unsaved and unconverted, do not love God. When one has come to love God, wherever, whenever or however it may have been, he has experienced all that is meant by conversion.

There are some sensitive persons who are anxious about their soul's salvation, who say that they want to be Christians and hope to be, if only God will grant them his saving grace, who really love him and show that they do. These persons would gain great comfort from a realization of the fact that God's love is in the

heart of only God's saved children. Loving him proves that they have savingly accepted of Jesus as their Savior, and that God for Christ's sake has pardoned their sins and accepted them as his children. No matter though they commenced to love him so early in life that they do not remember when it was, the present fact is that they are God's loving, forgiven and converted children.

To all who have not turned to God from their sins, in repentance and living faith, the loud and clear demand is made from on high that they shall cease their opposition or their indifference and yield to his divine and saving grace. It is a terrible thing to slight the love of God, and to live on without faith and love in the heart. This unbelief is the worst and most dangerous sin in the world. It is the sum and substance of all sins. It is the unwillingness to obey, love, and trust God. It is rejection of him. From this every soul should turn at once and forever.

THE BEGINNING OF LIFE.

Christian life must have a beginning. By nature we are all sinners, alienated from the life of God and guilty before his holy law. If we come into the new, saved life, there must be a change from what we are by nature. This change is of so marked nature that it is called by the striking name of the new birth. This name is most appropriate because the change is vital. It is of the very life.

There is something mysterious about the new birth. It is accomplished by the influence and operation of the Spirit of God. How it is brought about is not readily understood. But we see its effects and we know they are real. Christ illustrated it by the wind. No one can see the wind, but we can see the effects of the wind, and some very strong and substantial bodies go down before it. So it is with human souls when God's Spirit takes hold upon them.

The conversion of many a man has been a marvelous manifestation of the power of God. Many a soul can say: "I'm a

miracle of grace." Saul of Tarsus is a persecutor one moment, full of the deep, settled conviction that he ought to do many things contrary to Jesus of Nazareth, and the next moment he is changed in mind and heart, crying out: "Lord, what will thou have me to do." This one conversion is an unanswerable argument in favor of Christianity as a supernatural and divine religion. But every conversion, whether so striking as this or not, is a coming of God into the human soul in such a way as to convince the judgment, purify the affections and change the life. Such a transformation as this may well be called by the name of the new birth. Christ himself so describes it.

Here is a man who has been an unbeliever. He has set himself against the truth and the person of Christ. He reads the Bible only for the purpose of finding objections to it. He reads religious books and papers, and listens to the preaching of the gospel only in an antagonistic frame of mind. His only religious conversation is in the form of argument against the gospel. He amasses a library of infidel books and pamphlets. But God's Spirit reaches him, it may be in some time of

bereavement when his heart is broken, and he accepts the salvation and grace and comfort of Christ. He burns his infidel library and his life is dedicated to the service of God.

Here is a man who has lived wickedly. He has trodden God's commandments under foot and has made himself a wreck and a curse. He has brought shame to himself and to his friends. He has been evil and that continually. He has become unattractive and hateful, and the promise and prospects of life have become darkened. He is a moral leper. He is dead to purity. Can such a one as this be saved? Yes, Christ can save even to the uttermost. God's Spirit finds him. He turns in penitence and faith for cleansing to the fountain that was opened for sin and uncleanness, and he is made pure and clean as a child of God. Hereafter he walks in the way of life close to the side of Christ and is kept by him, through faith, unto everlasting life.

Here is a man who feels no need of Christ and who does not seek him. He is moral and has many excellencies of life and character. He is kind in his home, upright and honorable in business, and prides himself on his cleanness of life.

But he is a stranger to God, does not know what it is to pray, is without personal faith, and is utterly lacking in spiritual life. But God's Spirit reaches him. He comes to see himself a sinner, without God and without hope. He accepts Christ and enters upon a life that is beautiful in its humble service rendered to the Savior.

Such cases as these are continually occurring. Men and women who are unsaved are reached and led to yield their hearts and lives to God. Once without love, they came to be loving-hearted and entered the kingdom of heaven in the simple spirit of a little child. Christian life had a beginning. It was the new birth from on high in which they entered into the experiences of God's children. To this same experience of faith and love all are invited, as the Heavenly Father calls to them and says to them, one by one, "My son, give me thy heart."

WHAT MUST I DO TO BE SAVED?

In one sense we can do nothing for our own salvation. In another and very important sense, however, we can do a great deal, and if we do not do it we shall remain lost forever. Even the infinite goodness of God will not undertake to save those who disregard his conditions and persist in indifference and disobedience to his revealed will.

In the sense of doing what is meritorious, and thus procuring for himself salvation, the sinner is helpless. At this point he is entirely incapable of accomplishing anything effective. Here attempting to do anything is deadly. He is guilty before the law. He is defiled by sin. He must realize his lost condition as a preparation for accepting the mercy of God in Christ Jesus. Until he comes to know and feel himself sin-stained and condemned and helpless, he will not give up his confidence in himself and look to Christ as his only hope. To try to make himself just before God were presumptuousness. It were effrontery. It would bear all the marks of

insanity if it were not altogether based on sinful ignorance.

But while the sinner can do nothing meritorious, he can do what is appropriate. While he can not do anything to merit salvation, and make himself just and righteous in the sight of God, he can accept the salvation wrought out for him by Christ, and he can appropriate to himself the justification that is freely offered to all who do believe on Christ as their own personal Savior. The infinite mercy of God in Christ is pressed upon the sinner for his acceptance, and it is unbelief, and not humility, that prompts him to say that he can not believe and be saved. If under any form of delusion whatever, be that delusion one of a false philosophy or a morbid sentimentalism, he puts away the salvation procured for him and offered to him by Christ, he will go down to eternal death and ruin, and no specious plea will rescue him, when it is too late, from the consequences of his unbelief.

The one who is sick may not be able to prescribe the proper remedy for his disease, but he can permit the physician to examine him, can tell him how he incurred the sickness, and can take the remedies that are prescribed for him. The one who

is in prison may not be able to secure his own release, but he can let his advocate know all the circumstances, and can follow the directions he makes in securing his freedom. The pupil may not be able to teach himself the difficult branch he is studying, but he can be docile under instruction, and can learn that in which he is directed by his teacher. The sinner can not provide for himself salvation, but when Christ offers pardon, he can accept it; when the fountain is opened for sin and uncleanness, he can wash and be clean; when the ransom price is paid by the Redeemer, he may accept freedom from the debt of sin; when Christ stands before him ready and willing to bless him, he can bow in penitence and faith before him; when the door of grace is opened and God invites him to come in, he can enter and can have the blessed experience of a soul that has found eternal welcome to the Father's home of love.

The simple, practical truth of the gospel is that the sinner to whom the gospel invitation comes can accept and be saved. Moreover, he must accept or remain lost and undone forever. Besides all this, it is his duty to obey God, in repenting of his sin, believing in Christ, and accepting

salvation; and the neglect of this duty is the one sin that exceeds any other and all others in deadly power to destroy. We are to allow no sophistries to excuse us from simple obedience to God when he commands us to repent, believe, and be saved. It is our duty, for God commands it. It is possible for us, or he would not have commanded it. Unless we obey, there is no hope for us in the universe of God.

WHAT MUST I DO TO BE LOST?

The Word of God teaches us, most clearly and unmistakably, that something positive must be done to save men from their sin and its effects, but in order to be lost nothing more is necessary than to remain unsaved and go on to an unsaved eternity.

It is as with one adrift on the rapids above Niagara Falls. In order to be saved one must use the oars with all diligence, fighting against the terrible current, and working the way upstream. In order to be dashed over the falls it is only necessary to do nothing. Let the oars drop. Let the boat drift. Let the deadly current do its certain work. In order to be carried over the falls it is not necessary to do anything except to get in the current. Men, by nature, are in the current that is sweeping on down to perdition. It takes struggle and earnest effort to be saved. Positive measures must be employed. One must accept Jesus Christ in earnest faith. There must be penitence and prayer and faith. God's omnipotence must be laid hold of. Jesus' salvation must be accepted

The Holy Spirit must be welcomed. But in order to be lost it is only necessary that one shall do nothing more than to remain an unsaved sinner, and drift on down to the death and destruction of eternal perdition.

It is as with one stricken with a terrible fever. To let the fever burn on means certain death. All that is necessary, in order to death, is that the patient and his friends leave the fever go on unchecked. The skillful physician knows the remedy. He comes and prescribes it, and leaving minute directions, goes his way. Shall the remedy be administered as he bids? There is the secret of life or death. To do nothing means death. To save life there must be watchful care and attention and obedience. Life may be saved if all is done. If there is neglect, death is sure. But so certain is it that the remedy will save the life if properly administered that, if the remedy be neglected and death comes, it may be said, in all truthfulness, that neglect, and not the disease, has been the real cause of death. So it is with sin. It is sure to end in eternal death. But the sinner need not die if he will accept Christ the Savior. To remain in unbelief and go on in sin is sure destruction. The sinner

need not become flagrant and outbreaking and blasphemous in his unbelief. He need not mock and sneer at Christ, and revile his dying grace. All that is necessary is to go on without an acceptance of his salvation and he is lost. But so sure is Christ to save even the worst of sinners, if only he will believe on him, that, if he does not, but goes on to death, it may be said, in all truthfulness, that unbelief, and not the sin, is the real cause of his eternal death. Thus unbelief is the worst and most dangerous form of sin, and one needs do nothing but this in order to be eternally lost.

It is as when a house or city is afire. It will go on burning until entirely consumed, unless the flames be arrested. It is not necessary to saturate the building with oil, and carry the blaze to other buildings. The flames will spread. The city will go up in a wide-spreading conflagration. It will take positive work to check the fire, but it is only necessary that the negative attitude of doing nothing shall be taken in order that the city be laid in ruins. So burn the flames of sin in the human heart. In order to be saved there must be an earnest fleeing for grace to

Christ; but in case one does nothing, sin will burn on and on until the all-consuming desolation and despair of the soul shall be the flames of an unquenched eternal torment.

While those unsaved should lay all this to heart, so should their friends. We must not be inactive while those we love are still unsaved. We rather should follow the example of the four friends who bore the paralytic into the presence of the healing Savior, of whom we read that seeing "their faith" he gave heed to the man and healed him. The Lord regards the faith of those who in the arms of prayer and love present their loved ones to him, asking for his grace. If even two or three agree on earth, the Lord has gracious promises for them. It is not necessary that there should be four. But the two or three, even when the two may be the parents, should make earnest prayer and use earnest efforts that the one who is loved, and still unsaved, may come to a saved life. Until those who are loved are saved they remain lost. It is not necessary that they should wander into outrageous sin. Let prayers arise from the earliest infancy for the salvation of each child.

Let earnest efforts be put forth to lead each friend and loved one to an interest in Christ. Let there be conscious certainty that for friends to do nothing leaves a soul most unbefriended and in danger of remaining eternally lost.

REPENTANCE UNTO LIFE.

True repentance is sorrow over one's own sinfulness, and such sorrow as leads him to give it up and turn from it to God, and to a life of new and true obedience. If it does not result in this it is all mere sham or self-deception. It must be a godly sorrow that works life. It must be more than a mere self-pity and sorrow that one has been caught and made to suffer.

Repentance is a turning of the back upon sin and the traveling away from it fast and forever, as faith may be said to be involved in it as a turning of the face toward Christ and hastening toward him for all the future life. Faith in Jesus Christ as the personal Savior is bound to include hatred of, sorrow for, and a turning away from sin. There is no vital religion which does not include renunciation of sin, in simple and sincere dependence upon Jesus Christ as the Savior.

The worst people in the world are sorry for sin sometimes, at least to the extent of being sorry for the consequences of it. When one has committed a crime, and is

being punished for it he is sorry that the punishment has been measured out to him, and, sometimes, under these circumstances men will weep and mourn and lament in such fashion as to lead others to believe that they are really penitent.

But we must not be misled by such manifestations into giving the comfort which rightfully belongs only to godly sorrow. People do not relish punishment. Cain gave no evidence of any real sorrow for his sin, but he cringed and whimpered as his successors have usually done, saying: "My punishment is greater than I can bear." But in it all there is not a word of acknowledgment of his own wrongdoing.

The true penitent acknowledges that it is right for him to suffer. He knows that he has done wrong, he remembers the wrong he has done to others and to God, and he realizes that it is right for him to be punished. If there is an offer to him of pardon and release he does not simply congratulate himself over his escape, but he appreciates the grace that relieves him, and he pledges himself, heartily and sincerely, to a new life of real goodness and gratitude. If he is sincerely penitent he can be trusted to live a new and different

life. If he is not penitent, in truth he will soon be found again in wrong-doing.

What is known as death-bed repentance is very hazardous. It is not to be trusted. It is sometimes all that is left for a death-bed, but it is a most dangerous thing to depend on. There is in the Bible one case of repentance at the last hour of life, in the case of the penitent thief, and the account of this is given so that those may hope who seek to turn to God at that late hour, but there is only one case given as if to warn us from the deceptive and dangerous thought that we may delay repentance with impunity. Let no one who is in youth and health think to defer the duty of repentance. Each moment of delay is full of peril to his own soul, as it is full of disregard for and disobedience of the plain instructions and invitations of God. Many who have made expressions of penitance and faith, on what was supposed to be the death-bed, have recovered, and have shown, by their lives, that no saving change had been wrought in their souls. Had they died instead of living their unregenerate condition would have resulted in a lost eternity.

Repentance is not a solitary act to which

the Christian may look back as marking his entrance upon the new life. Rather is it to be the life-long attitude toward sin which the Christian maintains at all times. He is one who hates sin, and has turned his back upon it. He is dead to it. He takes no interest in it. He finds no place in his plans for that which grieves Christ and harms his own soul. He puts it beneath his feet. He makes no provision for it to obey it. Sin has no more dominion over him. He is out of its kingdom. He belongs to the kingdom of God. His face is turned toward Christ, and it stays turned toward him, that he may see him, adore him, and be guided by him in all the days and all the ways of future life.

GROWING IN GRACE.

It would be a very sad and disappointing thing if a babe were to make no growth, but were to remain, year after year, weak, small, helpless, incapable of intelligent activity and effort. What is charming in a babe ceases to be charming when the time comes for the babe to have larger and stronger life. Its helplessness and tenderness appeal to our hearts; but if these continue on through many years, we sorrow over it as an imbecile. We expect development, growth, and the putting forth of strength and vigor as expressions of vitality and in the ways of self-supporting and useful labor.

So it is expected that the Christian shall grow. He is born as a babe into the household of faith. His earliest attitudes are those of simple and childlike trustfulness, and of obedient receptivity as a simple learner of the truths of Christ. But he is to be more, as the years go by. He is not always to be a babe, nourished and sheltered by others, and led in the ways of peace and rest and ease. He is to learn

to think and act, to lead and help others, to be a positive and vigorous element in advancing the work of the kingdom of God.

Growth is the law in every vital department of the material world around us, and we are to expect it in intellectual and spiritual life as certainly as in the physical realm. If we do not grow, we fail and perish. We can not remain stationary for indefinite periods. We ought, as Christians, to know more and think more and pray more and work more and be more useful in the years of advancing life.

In order to growth and strength, there must be real vitality. We have this if the Holy Spirit has imparted the life of God to our souls, so that we are new creatures. If we are God's spiritually born children, we have the divine life within us. This is to be nourished, and God has given us the means for this. We are to be as careful as though a little babe were placed in our arms, to nourish and train for growing and useful life.

In the first place, we must have the proper nourishment. God's Word is to be read by us, not as history or literature or instruction in morals merely, but as food for our souls, which we are to receive daily, and meditate and pray over, and be-

lieve and love and practice. In order to its proper understanding and gracious benefits we are to associate with Christian people, are to be regular worshipers in God's house, and to use reverently all the means of grace, and are to read the words of godly men and women as found in religious books and papers. Irreligious and infidel books and papers and lectures and associations are to be shunned, as interfering with the sacred influences that God would impart to our souls, and as unworthy the attention of those who love and honor God.

In the second place, if we would grow in Christian life and character, we must be much in prayer. We must not only pray over God's Word for light and direction, but we must seek personal communication with God, so that he may impart himself to us. God does come into the very life of those who seek his indwelling, and without this we miss the best element and joy of spiritual life. Many persons have the habit of praying for protection as they lie down to sleep at night, but one may do this and still not know the secret and power of a life of prayer. We must pray for more than protection and prosperity for ourselves and our loved ones. We must learn

to talk with God as our dearest and most familiar friend, if we would know the grace and help that come to those who live a life of prayer.

But again, we must know what it is to be active if we would grow strong. He who simply eats and drinks and rests can not have healthful growth. He must take proper and regular exercise. The Christian must work and be useful and helpful. The Christian people who are working and giving in the church are not only the useful ones, but they are the happy and growing children of God. Christian activity helps the faith, and makes one more healthful and hopeful and happy in every way. One great secret of a successful church is for every member to be at work, and one great secret of a successful Christian life is to be so devoted to the cause of Christ that we will be diligent in his service. To work for Christ keeps us committed to him, keeps us close to him, and keeps us interested in those things that are dear to his heart.

By following these simple and yet most important rules of Christian life, we shall be sure to make advances and thus grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

“ALWAYS ABOUNDING.”

Paul was fond of using large words when speaking of the privileges and duties of Christian life. It was not that the words were long and hard to pronounce or understand. It was quite the opposite. The words themselves were apt to be short and easily understood, but they stood for great and wide and long things. They were great words not in the sense of filling the mouth, but with the power to fill the mind and the heart.

Such a word is “abounding.” It has the largeness of the ocean about it. It has the free range of the mountain in its atmosphere. It carries one out to the wide plains where there is no restriction to the liberty. The word means “without bounds.” It is the great sea rather than the pint-cup. It is the wide universe rather than the imprisoning room. It is the King’s treasure rather than the beggar’s dole. It is the grace of God poured out without measure into the heart of the Christian, and it is the grace of the Christian manifesting itself in loving and continuous service for

the sake of Christ. It seeks ever for enlargement. It tries not to save self, but ever to be more and do more. It breaks down the bounds of contradiction and confinement, and diffuses itself like the sunlight that floods all the spaces.

Here is the ideal for Christian life. It is not to be selfish and contracted, but large, active, diligent, abounding in all that is good and lovely and gracious. Thus is it to be with our prayers, going up to the throne of Grace for great and wide blessings. Thus it is to be with our affections, taking in the whole wide world and bearing it before God in our desires for its salvation. Thus it is to be with our labors for the advancement of the interests of the kingdom of Christ, as we use our powers with unselfish stint, seeking to accomplish great and lasting results over which we shall rejoice in the eternal world. Thus is it to be with our giving, and though in our poverty we may not be able to give what we would like to bestow, yet God will make even that which is not to be as though it were, and will make his blessing enlarge the results of that which we gave in faith and love.

Such another large word is "always." It is a great thing to do what is good and not

grow weary in the doing; to be faithful and steadfast and changeless in gracious attitude and effort. So many persons are prone to give up after a little work for a good cause. So many start out and run well for a season, and then relax their running. So many can be counted on to be very zealous while the new enthusiasm is on, and then grow very cold when the first flush of interest dies out. It is not hard to arouse a burst of zeal, but it is something difficult to keep on and on after the romance has faded from the heart. Deep-seated principle is needed in the soul to keep one going after the going has come to be a plodding and a grind. But some have this principle, and they keep on. Keep on when they are weary? Yes. Keep on when they are feeling worn? Yes. Keep on when others drop out, and the company thins, and the enthusiasm fades? Yes. Always! By night and by day, in summer and in winter, in heat and in cold, in storm and in calm, in youth and in old age, it is always good to be zealously affected in a good matter and to keep on faithfully, steadfastly and unwaveringly, to the very end.

Any one might enlist as a soldier if he might drop out at the first cold wind, or

the first rough road, or the first dark night, or the first sight of the enemy; but the soldier is to endure hardness, and the good soldier stands to his lot. The marriage vow is until death shall part. The Christian vow is for faithfulness unto death, with no discharge in the war. The stalwartness of a good and true life is seen in a steadfastness that persists, and that abounds, not for a little time of pleasant hours and sunny experiences, but always, ever and forever, in unswerving faith and loyalty, on to the very end.

We depend on God. We know there are no bounds to his grace if we put ourselves where we may be the recipients of it according to his covenant. We know that his promise will never be broken, and that his words will be true as long as the heavens endure. Let his gracious and glorious character be not only our refuge, but the model on which we fashion our lives, and let us strive to be godly, in the sense of being like God, in unwavering faithfulness and in abounding unselfishness in the service of God and man.

THE CONVERSION OF CHILDREN.

Childhood is the best age for conversion. No time in all the earthly experience is so opportune for this gracious beginning of the new life as the period that occurs so early that it can not be remembered. Those who are led to love and accept Christ in these early days gain the crowning experience of earth at the time when it will do them the most good and make them the greatest blessing to others.

A child learns to love its mother so early that it is never able to remember the time when it did not love her. It seems to one that he always loved his mother. Yet, as a fact, this is impossible. The love commenced, and at some definite time, too. Feeble it was in its beginning, and yet there was a beginning. The brooding love, the tender caress, the gentle smile, the patient care, the sweet winsomeness of the mother awakened an answer one day, and it found expression in a tiny pressure of the hand and a little smile on the baby face. Love was born because the mother came to be known to the baby in her mother love.

When Christ is presented to the little child as the loving, tender, holy, ever-present yet unseen friend and Savior, the heart goes out to him in love under the winning grace of the Holy Spirit. The heart of the child is sweetly susceptible to the spiritual influences that come from God, and when the sweet old story of Jesus and his love is told simply and tenderly and truly by those who are trusted and loved by the child, there is born within him the sincere and unquestioning love that answers to that of Christ, and marks the beginning of the Christian life. It is an experience which is real, which we should welcome, and over which we should rejoice. Yet how many doubt its reality, and, instead of suffering the little children to come to Christ, forbid them so far as lies within the sphere of our chilling fears to do so.

The theory of a great many persons is that religion is beyond the reach of children to understand or grasp. They realize, at the same time, that a large proportion of those who grow into adult life without accepting Christ go on unmoved and unsaved. The hearts of the little children should be savingly affected, and every year which one lives beyond sixteen without an

outspoken and public acceptance of him is a year of heart-breaking peril to the soul. No greater mistake could be made by any one than that of encouraging or directing children to pass the most opportune time of life without conversion, and go on to the years in which so many know only a growing hardness of heart.

The most thoroughly sensible and philosophical course to take in any matter is that of working along the line of the least resistance. It would be utter folly to put off the education of the child until adult life, on the plea that philosophy and the higher mathematics can not be understood in early childhood. If education is deferred until maturity, there will be little taste or power or opportunity found for acquiring it. Childhood is the time for the opening of the heart as well as of the intellect, and we are strangely insensible if we do not use every known means to win them to the knowledge and the love of Christ.

Those are the wisest and most effective evangelists who direct their most earnest and continued efforts to the winning of the children. The child of ten who becomes a Christian may have sixty years before it for Christian service. The man of sixty

who becomes a Christian may have ten years left out of a wasted life. Let the evangelists seek the salvation of the men who are ready to perish, but especially let them seek the conversion of the little children, who may serve God for many years and help win the world for Christ. And so that pastor is wise who seeks to lead the lambs of the flock to the Savior, and then train them to love and live near to him who died to save them. And that mother is wise who, not leaving the matter of her child's salvation to some possible outside influence in the years to come, sets herself to teach it of Jesus and his love, point it to heaven and allure the way. Such efforts are worthy of the best and truest motherhood, and are the surest of all not to go unrewarded.

We might give the names of many who in later life became great in the work of God's kingdom on earth, who became Christians in very early life. Many of the most eminent men and women who have ever lived tell us that they gave their hearts to the Savior at twelve or eight or six, or so early in life that they had no remembrance of a time when they did not love him. There can be no doubt as to the reality and effectiveness of such experi-

ences. Let us give up all unworthy and reluctant doubtings as to this. Let us fall in line with God's providence and grace, and use consecrated efforts to lead the little ones to the Savior, that they may be satisfied early with his mercy, and that, all through life, they may walk in ways of pleasantness and paths of peace.

THE IMITATION OF CHRIST.

The highest ambition that can enter a human soul is the ambition to become like Christ. Of course, no mere human being can become entirely like Christ, for Christ was superhuman, but he may strive to imitate his virtues and his life. The higher the model the loftier will be the striving. The loftiest and noblest efforts to be pure and good will be made by those who, accepting Jesus Christ as their Savior and example, make it the purpose of their lives to be like him so far as they can become by the grace of God.

Hawthorne, in his story, "The Great Stone Face," illustrates how a great ideal purifies, molds and elevates a life. The boy of whom the story was told had been accustomed to see on the side of the mountain the clear-cut face, with dignity and benignity on the features, and was told that some day there would come to the valley a man resembling this stone face, and that he would prove to be the greatest friend and benefactor to the people. The boy studied the face of each stranger who

came to the valley to see if he might not be the coming benefactor. Time and again he was disappointed. The rich man did not resemble the stone face. The great scholar did not have the features he knew so well. One after another, for successive years, came short of the resemblance, but still he held on to the faith that the great friend and benefactor, looking like this stone face, would come to bless them.

As the thought brooded in the boy's mind he was led to idealize the character of the man who should come. He conceived that he must be lofty in his thoughts, serene in his faith, pure in his character, gentle and kind and tender to the people, and as he thought of all these desirable qualities, he began to take them on himself. He grew more and more gentle to all, thoughtful and considerate and helpful, manly and full of sweet-heartedness which took the form of unmistakable dignity and kindness. The years went by, and as his hair whitened and his face took on more and more of the internal thought and character of the man, the people of the valley came to realize that he who was the friend and counselor of them all was the very image of the stone face, and the benefactor and friend who had already come to them.

The one who takes Christ as his ideal, and who tries to be like him, will very largely realize what it is to live a Christly life. Others will see in him a purity and beauty and goodness and kindness that will remind them of the Master. He will not be able to perform miracles of healing the sick, but he can visit the sick and comfort them in their suffering. He will not be able to make the blind to see and the deaf to hear and the dumb to speak, but he can do something to alleviate their lot and to make their lives brighter by his friendly words and deeds. He can go about his business in a loving spirit, dealing justly with all, and showing mercy and speaking truth. He can live with a heart full of love and faith and prayer, and can help draw those around him within the influences of God's grace and life. As he lives and after he is gone men will in some way be reminded of Christ.

The Apostle Paul urged those whom he addressed to follow him as he followed Christ. With his intimate knowledge of the spirit and teachings of the Lord, as he was inspired by the Holy Spirit, he sought to reproduce Christ in his own life, so that others might, in seeing him, see Christ, and be led to become like him in their own

turn. It has been said that "the Christian is the worldling's Bible, and that he reads no other." Certain it is that the Christian is closely watched, and if his life is blameless and harmless, and reminds those about him of Christ, he becomes a great power to help them to see the beauty of a holy life and to accept it as their own.

We have often noticed a growing likeness even in the physical features and facial expression between two persons who, being happily mated, have lived long together in the marriage relation. Especially is it true that two persons, so related, become greatly alike in their moral and spiritual qualities. If they both love the Lord Jesus Christ they come to be greatly like one another as they both come to be greatly like him. The change of character along the lines of truth and goodness and purity and spiritual beauty, as Christ is taken as model and leader and friend, is the most impressive and important thing occurring in human life, and many are praying and striving that they may come to be like him who is the Chief among ten thousands and altogether lovely.

We are not driven to imagine the excellencies of Christ. They are delineated in

the Gospels, and so beautifully is his character presented that thoughtful men, everywhere, have agreed that he was the best and purest being who ever lived. To be like him we do not have to suppose or imagine or dream of what he was. We are to study the record of his life; pray in the Holy Ghost; give ourselves to him in true devotion; seek in obedience and spirituality and faith to reproduce his likeness. However we may come short, we shall find it better to strive to be like him. Some time we shall be satisfied when we awake in his likeness.

CHRISTIAN WORSHIP.

*“Thou shalt love the Lord thy God
with all thy * * * soul.”—Mark
xii. 30.*

* * *

*“Thou shalt worship the Lord thy
God.”—Matt. iv. 10.*

* * *

*“With the mouth confession is made
unto salvation.”—Romans x. 10.*

* * *

*“He that believeth and is baptized
shall be saved.”—Mark xvi. 16.*

* * *

*“This do in remembrance of Me.”—
Luke xxii. 19.*

CONFESSING CHRIST.

The Christian life is not to be lived in secret. The Christian's hope is not to be concealed in the recesses of his own heart. It is as essential to the life of the child of God that he be outspoken in his love and faith as it is to the flower that it unfold in the beauty and fragrance of bloom. A secret, silent, unconfessed Christian life is as hard to conceive as a flower that never reveals its existence in fragrance or color. What would such a life amount to, and why should God call such a loveless and unlovely existence into being?

He who would have an interest in Christ and would have the respect and recognition of Christ must be openly, and without question, a confessing follower of Christ. There is no mistaking the meaning of the words spoken by our Lord in regard to confessing him or being ashamed of him. He himself will be ashamed of us or will confess us, at the great day and in the great Presence, according to the attitude we take toward him here and now.

Christ did not try to make it easy for

people to be his followers, in the sense of allowing them to keep quiet about it, or to compromise the matter, or to remain his disciples in secret. He knew the human heart too well to permit anything like this. He knew that in so important a matter it was necessary for them to be fully and openly committed to his service.

If it was a necessity then for human nature to be outspoken if it would be true and if it would receive the real benefit, it is none the less necessary now. If we would be the followers of Christ, we must follow him in the sight of the world, and be identified with him, or we may forget our allegiance and live, or attempt to live, a double life. A double life deceives no one but the one who tries to live it. It certainly does not deceive God even for a little time. He who is not positively for Christ is against him.

An illustration is furnished in the case of marriage. Any woman would better be careful of the man who proposes marriage to her, but desires to keep the fact of the marriage a secret. The great danger, as many a deceived woman has found too late, to her cost, is that the marriage was only a sham. He who is a true and good man is ready, when he marries a woman, to do

so in an open and public manner, in the presence of mutual friends, and according to the laws of the land. Marriage should always be thus public, that both parties may be fully committed to each other for life.

Why should any one think that Christ is more easily satisfied than a human being, or that religion with its offered benefits, is a matter to keep secret, if it really exists? Every one who is desirous of Christ's salvation should accept it as it is offered, and in the most outspoken way, before all the world, should acknowledge Jesus Christ as his Savior, and should pledge him his love and service.

The true Christian will consider it a high and distinguishing honor to be permitted to be identified with Christ here on earth as one of his professed followers. It is but a little thing for him not to be ashamed of Christ, for there is nothing to be ashamed of in the glorious and beautiful character of the Savior. It is a great thing, however, for Christ not to be ashamed of the imperfect and fallible men and women who call him their Lord. But because they trust in him and love him and try to do his will, by his divine grace assisting them, he has left it on record

that he is not ashamed to be identified with them here, and is ready and willing for them to take his name and be known as his followers. And there is a day coming, the great day for which all other days were made, in which it will be the joy and glory of our lives if Christ is not ashamed of us. If we love and trust him now, he will certainly own us then, and if we are lovingly identified with him here, he will be our deliverer there, "the strength of our heart and our refuge forever." Here and now, henceforth and forever, we may well choose to be one with Christ in the frankness of outspoken life and unfaltering fellowship.

CHURCH ATTENDANCE.

There is a philosophical reason for the existence of institutions that have had long continuance. There is a call for them or they would not endure. They supply a real need or they would not continue to hold their place among men.

Church attendance is one of these. It is provided for in God's Word. Directions are given and exhortations are repeated urging men not to neglect or forget their duty in this direction. As an institution it comes down to us in an unbroken line. The people who assembled around Ezra's pulpit of wood came, as the congregations of to-day to hear God's Word read and explained, and thus they joined in public worship.

There is a call for these public services. Closet prayer and family worship do not supply all the needs of those who pray. There is a social side to our moral and spiritual natures that demands public worship. And preaching is demanded. We listen not alone in order to receive instruction, or for the charm that lies in the

human voice, or from some lurking willingness to be temporarily dominated by the will of some one whom we respect. There is the fact of social alliances with others in the community, and the sense that, in order to the best results, all must be instructed, dominated and marshaled alike. The Gospel purifies a community and organizes its members for high and holy purposes. Irreligion segregates, dissipates and disperses. Of all places in the world, there is none so cheerless as a godless community.

Many an irreligious man excuses himself from church attendance by claiming that he finds the woods and hills better and more congenial places for worship. But does he worship there, or is it a fiction all? Is it not the specious plea of men who quiet their conscience and answer sober argument by an excuse coined out of pure hypocrisy? The fact is that most men who neglect church attendance spend the Sabbath in merely secular life. Some in work and some in worldly recreations take the time which should be given to God and their souls, and absent themselves from the services of the sanctuary for selfish and irreligious reasons.

The minister of a certain church com-

menced his work with his congregation by a very poetical and liberal extolling of nature as a means of spiritual uplift, and contrasted the green fields and sloping hillsides and running streams and blue skies with the pent-up meeting-house, greatly to the disadvantage of the latter. The years went by, and little as he learned of some things, he learned that he had made a great mistake in trying to build up a church by urging people to neglect its services. And so, upon receiving another call, he urged the people whom he left behind to stand by their church and to attend its services, and to encourage the pastor by being present whenever he was in the pulpit. He told them that a fitting, wandering, unstable life was unsatisfactory, and that personally and as families they should build up their lives upon the lines of the Sabbath and the sanctuary. At the close of the service a gentleman came to him and said sadly that he wished he had preached that sermon at the beginning rather than at the close of his work with them, telling him that he had followed the counsel of his first sermon, and that it had most deplorable results for his sons, who had all become godless men.

The fact is, that if children are trained up to attend church and to regard God's commandments, they will become God-fearing people as the years go by. This is the rule made by God, who has decreed that grapes shall not grow thorns nor figs produce thistles. If any man thinks that he can find God not carrying out this law, let him sustain his specifications if he thinks that he can. Mr. Spurgeon said that at one time he boarded with seven other young men. Two of them went regularly to church and observed the Sabbath. The others stayed away from church and spent the Sabbath in worldly recreation and wandering about in quest of amusement. The two grew into strong, stalwart Christian men; the other six became dissipated and useless worldlings.

The church and its services become a very touchstone of character. As we stand in reference to them we disclose our character. If we honor God, he will honor us. If we serve him in obedience and humble patience, he will crown and beautify our lives.

UNITING WITH THE CHURCH.

Uniting with the church is one of the most pronounced ways of confessing Christ. It is so distinctly understood to be the privilege and duty of all Christ's followers to be members of the church that those who neglect it have little right to expect others to regard them as Christians. Those who stand aloof from the church, whatever else they may say or do, show but little regard for Christ.

The church is a divine institution. It was devised and instituted by God himself as the home and household of his people here on earth. To them, thus organized, he has committed the sacred duty of extending his kingdom on earth. In the church are to be enrolled all who love him. To the church has been committed the holy mission of making known his will, of preaching and teaching his Gospel, of sustaining his ordinances, of administering his sacraments, and of doing all that work by means of which he reaches savingly the hearts of the people to regenerate and sanctify them, and to bring

them at last into the glory and happiness of his everlasting kingdom. The church thus has a high and holy mission, and no one who loves God ought to hold aloof from its life and work.

Of course, it is possible to fall into the mistake of depending upon church membership as a ground for acceptance with God, as the Pharisees did in the days of Christ, and as we fear multitudes have done since their time. But the formalism of some is no excuse for our disregarding and disobeying the expressed will of God, that we should be members of his church, and that we should there serve him with sincere and steadfast faithfulness. We must not avoid one evil by falling into another. We must avoid them both, and simply seek to do God's will. The Christian who loves God with all his heart and soul will be found here on earth in the church which Christ loved, and which he has purchased with his own blood.

There are many good and great reasons for uniting with the church. It is the general judgment of God's people that it is a divinely designated duty, and we should not set ourselves in opposition to this. There is important work to be done in saving our world, and in order to do

this Christian people should be thoroughly organized, as God directs, under his banner. The work of the church is needed for the encouragement of the good and for opposition to evil, for the promotion of missions at home and abroad, for the fostering of what is sacred, for the advancement of what is highest and best, and for the comfort and encouragement of all who are trying to do God's will. United effort is needed. Let us not hold aloof. The service of Christ should enlist all our hearts and lives.

Christ has instituted his sacraments, and has told us to observe them. Only those who are the professed followers of Christ have a right to come to the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. In order to have this privilege we must be members of the church. It is a great and terrible mistake for any one to go through this life without obeying Christ in his sacramental requirements, and without being a member of the church into the fold of which he invites all who are his real followers.

There are some excuses put forward for not uniting with the church, but these all arise from timidity, pride, self-sufficiency, prejudice, censoriousness, obstinacy, self-

ishness, or other worldly and unworthy motives. Some may be deceived into thinking them sufficient reasons for disregarding the will of Christ, but they are all as chaff before the winnowing fan and fire of the Holy Spirit. Let his divine grace be welcomed into the heart, and these excuses disappear forever, and the soul that loves is ready to obey.

We need the church, with its holy ordinances, its helpful influences, its sacred attractions, and its beneficent restraints. It is needed by the individual, the family, the community and the world. Where it is not, the world is poor indeed. Let us identify ourselves with Christ and his church, and let us show that we love him who loved us and gave himself for us.

BAPTISM.

Baptism with water is one of the two sacraments of the Christian Church. It is properly administered by sprinkling or pouring, and it symbolizes the work of the Holy Spirit descending and poured out upon his people for their cleansing. The whole analogy and teaching of the Scriptures lead us to believe this to be the proper form for the sacrament, and we know of no sufficient argument for its administration in any other manner.

Baptism and the Lord's Supper in the New Testament take the place of Circumcision and the Passover of the Old Testament. As the Passover Feast was for the commemoration of the deliverance of the Israelitish people, through the sprinkling of the blood of the Passover lamb on the door-posts of their dwellings, so the Lord's Supper commemorates the deliverance of believers through the death of Christ, the Lamb of God, who was sacrificed for us on Calvary. As circumcision was the sign and seal of the covenant, and was administered to all the infant sons of the nation

to signify their being a living part of the Israel of God, so does baptism signify and seal faith in Jesus Christ, dependence upon the Holy Spirit for spiritual life and cleansing, and a covenant engagement to be the Lord's. In either case, administered to the children, it expressed the faith of their parents and involved the heartfelt pledge that the children should be brought up in the fear of the Lord. The Jewish people are still bound as a compact people in the practice of circumcision, and nine-tenths of the whole Christian Church, from generation to generation, have taken this covenant view of the sacrament of baptism.

As the Gospel was sent out on its mission of world-wide conquest, it was provided also that adults, upon their conversion, should be baptized upon confession of their own faith in Christ, their spiritual acceptance of the cleansing of the Holy Spirit and their engagement to be the Lord's. Thus adult proselytes came into the Jewish nation and were circumcised, and were then careful that their children should have the right relationship with Israel by means of this ordinance. While adult baptism is for all who have come to

mature life before being in covenant relation with the Lord in his church, the proper administration of baptism is to infants, by sprinkling of water, on the faith of their parents in Jesus Christ, and in dependance on the Holy Spirit for the spiritual life and cleansing of the children they devote to God and his service.

Those who have been baptized in infancy should feel under great obligations to God for having graciously placed them in circumstances so spiritually favorable, and should be prompt to take upon themselves the vows which were taken for them in infancy by their Christian parents. We believe this to be a most effectual means of grace, and feel assured that the great mass of those baptized in infancy, if they are properly trained, will be led to accept for themselves the saving grace and blessed service of Jesus Christ.

Those who have come to mature life without baptism have the privilege of receiving it upon profession of their faith and their reception into the church. No one should permit himself to pass through life without this sacrament. It was divinely instituted, and it is intended to symbolize, and thus to honor, the work of the

Holy Spirit, the second person of the blessed Trinity, who cleanses and sanctifies the hearts of his people, thus fitting them for the service and enjoyment of God, here and hereafter. We should very humbly and lovingly receive him into our hearts, do his will and let his will be done within us, and in all ways honor him upon whom we are dependent for spiritual life and progress.

Baptism is of great importance, and should not be neglected by any one who has regard for the wishes and directions of Jesus Christ. It is a privilege and it is a duty. Yet it is not, of itself, saving. Only Jesus Christ, accepted in faith, can save us. What is enjoined by him, however, we must not overlook or underestimate. He himself has taught us that "he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned," whether he has been baptized or not. Let us accept all of his holy ordinances as means for the imparting of his divine grace, and through them let us be brought to know him more clearly and to love him better all through our earthly life.

BURIED IN BAPTISM.

A young man had been converted. His religious experience had been genuine, thorough and satisfactory. He had personal assurance of his acceptance with God through the grace of Jesus Christ, and he rejoiced in the blessed consciousness that God, for Christ's sake, had forgiven all his sins, and had given to him the end of his faith, even the salvation of his soul.

He turned his back upon whatever in his past life had been sinful and unprofitable. His repentance was deep and thorough-going. He had passed from death into life. From the old habits and attitudes, of word, thought and deed, that were deadly and that worked death, he turned with the full purpose of, and endeavor after, new obedience. To him repentance was not one simple act performed. It was an attitude taken, and to be maintained. He was to keep his back turned on sin. He was dead to it. He was not to live any longer therein. Old things had passed away. He had entered a new life, of new aspirations and new relations. He was dead to the old life

of sin. His life henceforth was hid with Christ in God. He had come into the kingdom, and saw and heard and thought with newly awakened spiritual faculties. He loved to pray, to talk with God, to be with Christian people, to engage in worship, to serve and follow Christ.

It was as though he had been dead and buried to his old life of sin. He was no longer identified with it. A new experience had cut him off from it. God's Holy Spirit had wrought a change in him as though he had passed forever out of, and away from, the things that had once held him in thralldom. It was no dream. It was no imagination. Let those think so who will. To him it was a real experience—positive, vivid and satisfying.

But there came the Sabbath day when he was to make the public profession of his faith, and be welcomed publicly as one of the followers of Jesus Christ in his Church on earth. Thoughtfully and prayerfully he had looked forward to this solemn and impressive occasion. He was to receive the sacrament of baptism, instituted by Jesus Christ as the sign and seal of the faith of his believing people. He was to testify of his changed relations. He was to tell

of his death to the old life, and he was to profess his solemn purpose to live for Jesus Christ. It was to be a public act. It was to be in the presence of his fellow Christians. It was to be, as it were, a public burial of his old life of unbelief and sin, that it might be put out of sight and forgotten, and that he might be known and counted by all as a new man, risen from the dead, to walk in newness of life.

The time came for the service. The public profession was made. The old life from which he had turned in repentance and to which he had led, was publicly disavowed and publicly repudiated. The water of baptism, in Scriptural form, was sprinkled on his brow. The outward sign and seal ordained of Christ was administered in the Triune Name, and he stood committed to the new life, even as one who leaves a corrupt body in the grave and passes in spirit-existence into the spiritual world.

From this time and place he was numbered among the risen children of God. He lived the new life. The stress of a new nature and of an avowed change of relation was upon him. Old things had passed away. All things had become new. Why should he who was dead to sin live any

longer therein? The power of the unseen world was in his soul. He lived as one under the power of an endless life.

This is the meaning of being "buried with Christ in baptism." Regeneration, which is brought about by the influence of the Holy Spirit who cleanses the heart, makes one a new creature. The water of baptismal sprinkling, which typifies that cleansing from above, is a sacramental service which publicly severs one from the past, and officially marks his entry into the new life of the professed followers of Christ.

CHILD CHURCH MEMBERSHIP.

The child of believing parents, members of the visible church themselves, is by birthright a member of the church. There is nothing in this that need startle any one. It is not a statement that children do not need to be regenerated in order to come into the personally saved life. It is not a claim that church membership, of itself, is sufficient to salvation. It is not a statement that these children are communicants, or entitled to come to the Lord's Table without any preliminary experience. It is simply the expression of the fact that they are members of the church.

The child is a member of the family into which it is born. It does not have to be adopted in order to become a member of it. It is born so. This does not mean that it is an adult member, or a self-supporting member, or a contributing or controlling member of the family. It is an infant. It is to be cared for, nurtured, supported, instructed and gradually inducted into the doing of life's duties. And it is through this conception of the family and

the relation of the child to it that the family has been, and is, maintained.

The child is a member of the nation into which it is born. It does not have to be naturalized, nor even to declare its intention to become a citizen. It is born so. This does not mean that it is expected, in its infancy or childhood, to bear arms, pay taxes or vote. It does mean that it is a component part of the nation's life. It is helpless and irresponsible in its early life, but it is as surely a member of the nation as is any man in public life, and its abduction by any foreign power would be resented, if necessary, by the whole armament of the nation. And it is through this conception of the nation, and the relation of the child to it, that patriotic citizenship has been developed and fostered.

We hold that the whole trend of Bible teaching, as well as the analogies of practical life, emphasizes the fact that the child born to parents who are the professed followers of Christ are, themselves, members of the church. Our Presbyterian Discipline states this very plainly and forcefully when it says:

All children born within the pale of the visible church are members of the church, are to be baptized, are under the care of

the church, and subject to its government and discipline; and when they have arrived at years of discretion, they are bound to perform all the duties of church members.

There are some bodies of Christian people who object to this, saying that they believe only in "believers' membership." They might as well demand that there shall be only nothing but adult membership for the family or the nation. God has put the children in the state, the family and the church. If they are properly cared for and nurtured, they will, in adult life, be found filling their places well in the home, in the nation, and in the Church of Jesus Christ.

There are some who are exceedingly afraid that this view may lead to a mere formalistic or sacramentarian view of church membership and its privileges. We will grant that they are conscientious, but we are free to insist that it does not work in that way. The children who are carefully and tenderly nurtured by parents who regard them as members of the church from infancy, as well as members of the family, and who use all efforts to train them for Christ, will, in most cases, come to have reverent regard for the things of religion, a habitual use of the means of

grace and a personal love for and faith in Christ. This is regeneration. He who loves and believes in Christ is regenerated. The proper instruction at the right time in their early childhood will lead them to make profession of their faith and of their readiness and desire to come to the Lord's Table.

The dedication of the children to God in their infancy in baptism, by parents who regard this as the sign of a sacred covenant, is to be followed by their careful training in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. This we regard as being far more apt to result in good to the children than the theory and practice of leaving them entirely outside the pale of the visible church in their infancy and childhood. We hold the view, however, that children are members of the church, not simply because we think it beautiful, or touching, or logical, or even because it works well, but because we believe it to be, in addition to all this, agreeable to and taught in the Word of God.

THE LORD'S SUPPER.

The Lord's Supper, which is stately observed in our churches, is a feast commemorative of the death and sufferings of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, by whom it was instituted in the night wherein he was betrayed. It is thus connected historically, doctrinally and in personal experience with the supremely important and central facts and truths of the Gospel. Its observance being enjoined by Christ himself, no one who has any regard for him will neglect this holy ordinance, and those who voluntarily refrain through life from its observance show that they have but little respect for him who died for his people and who said, "This do in remembrance of me."

We call it a feast, but it stands apart from all ordinary festal occasions as one of most striking simplicity and sacred dignity. The emblems are the bread, made of the crushed grains of the wheat to typify the broken body of the Savior, and the cup containing the pure fruit of the vine to set forth the blood of Christ that

was shed for our salvation. A mere fragment of the bread is taken by each communicant and a simple sip from the cup. It is no material feast. These elements are intended to assist the spiritual grasp of the precious and supreme truth that Christ, the Lamb of God, gave his body to be broken and his lifeblood to be shed that we, accepting him in living faith, might be saved from the guilt and power of sin and be preserved into everlasting life.

The Lord's Supper is a commemoration of the sacrificial death and sufferings of our Savior. He wished these to be remembered. They must not be forgotten. There is no Gospel where these are not preached or known. Knowing the tendency of men, even when most sincere, to forget or overlook matters of vital importance, and the danger there might be of leaving out of the preaching of his Gospel the central fact of his atoning death, Christ gave the sacrament to be an abiding, external object lesson, setting forth, everywhere and forever, the truth that must not be lost out of sight. So it has been that, even where men have not preached the Gospel as fully and forcefully as they ought, this holy

service has set forth the great central truths that cluster around the cross of the great Redeemer, who died that we might live. Each time the Lord's Supper is administered the truth is borne in upon us that we have life only through faith in Christ who died.

Nothing could be more simple than this service. There is no claim among Scriptural believers that there is any priestly or mysterious work wrought by the one who administers the sacrament. We have only pity and abhorrence for the papal doctrines of the mass and the claim that at the word of the priest the miracle is wrought of the change of the elements into the real body and blood of Christ, and that the holy sacrifice of Christ for sinners is re-enacted. This is a monstrous perversion of the simple truth of the Gospel that Christ died in a sacrifice never to be repeated. We put our faith in him as the Savior who ever lives to save and bless those who trust him.

The Lord's Supper is a spiritual feast in that we are led by the use and enjoyment of it, as a most precious means of grace, into a helpful and comforting realization of Christ's personal presence with us, and

as we pray to him and commune with him, and as he imparts himself to us, we are nourished and comforted and strengthened for the duties of Christian life.

The Lord's Supper is a time especially appropriate for the renewing of our covenant with Christ. We call it a sacrament, and this word carries us back to remember the oath, which the Roman soldier took, of loyalty to the government into whose special service he had entered. He took oath to be true and faithful in the defense of his country. Let us feel, as we engage in the service of the holy Supper, that we are not only communing with Christ, and witnessing for him, and commemorating his death, but that we are renewing our covenant obligation to be true to him, his cause, his Church and his holy service.

PRAYER.

Prayer being a Christian duty and a natural impulse, implanted in the heart by Nature and by Grace, there must be some good and great reasons for it. God does not mock us. He who has created the eye for light, and the ear for sound, and the heart for love, provides lovely objects for the heart, sweet harmonies for the ear, and beautiful colors for the eye. He who has taught us and urged us to pray provides answers for our prayers and results that follow our petitions.

Even if God had never spoken a word to us on the subject, we might still argue that he will hear prayer. Earthly parents and friends do, and surely God is as good as these if he is good at all. Children ask and plead for what they want, and we must ask God for what we need. It is in our hearts to do so. We can not keep from praying unless we repress our natures and do violence to the life that God has put within us. Especially when quickened and renewed is there a spirit of prayer in our hearts. We are made akin to God,

and our hearts cry out to him in the sense of our need and of the new and blessed relationship.

Those who pray aright expect something to result from their prayers. They expect answers. They have a right to expect results. If not, there is something wrong somewhere. A mistake has been made in this case. There is general understanding that the right sort of prayers, from the right sort of persons, made in the right way, are answered. This understanding is correct. There is a reason for this general faith.

As a foundation for this faith is the fact that God has made specific promises. He says that he will answer prayer. We are assured that the fervent, effectual prayer of a righteous man availeth much. We are told that they who ask and seek and knock shall be rewarded. We have the assurance that God will hear and answer and give good things to those who seek them from his hands.

It would be strange if a single soul should fail of answer to his prayer if that prayer is for something at all in harmony with the will of God. It would be increasingly strange if a desired answer should not be secured where many persons

unite in asking for it. If one good person makes a certain prayer, there is a presumption in favor of that thing being right, and where a large number of good persons unite in desiring and asking for it, the presumption increases in favor of its rightfulness. We then become increasingly sure that God, who makes it the object of his being to advance, and secure what is right, will see that this is secured.

The experience of God's people in all ages and lands has been in favor of prayer. They have engaged in it, and have been satisfied with its results. One of the most distinguishing marks of Christian people has been the habit of personal prayer. They would not have persisted in it, and recommended it, and borne testimony to its benefits, unless there were something of real benefit in it. If painters have always used brushes, and sculptors used chisels, the presumption is that these are the right and appropriate instruments for these lines of work; and if Christians have always prayed, it is sure as anything can be that we shall make a mistake if we do not pray.

The observation, too, of many excellent and wise people has been that prayers are answered. Of course these prayers must

be for things agreeable to God, for it would be preposterous to ask for anything else with the expectation of receiving it in answer to prayer. These prayers must be reverent, believing, earnest prayers, for it could not for a moment be expected that God would regard any other kind. Let us learn to pray in this spirit, and, in line with the good and trusting of all ages and lands, we shall gain a rich experience, and shall have increasing evidences of the fact that God answers prayer.

FAMILY WORSHIP.

It matters not what societies and organizations there may be for the nurture and development of Christian life, there is nothing to take the place of the Christian home, and there is nothing in the home to take the place of family worship. Other things being equal, there is most of piety and strong character to be expected from that home in which God's Word is read daily and prayer offered to God by the united household. Out of such homes go men and women to walk reverently and obediently before God; to do his will, and to serve him in their generation.

If family worship were carried on in every home of a congregation, the church would be stronger and more hopeful, even without prayer meeting, Sabbath-school or Christian Endeavor, than it would be with these last three, but without family worship. This may seem a very sweeping statement, but if one will stop to consider what is involved, he will scarcely care to question it. The Bible would be read aloud in the presence of all the members of all

these families, including the children, every day, and prayer would be engaged in which would, necessarily, be much more personal than is possible in most public services. The house would be distinctly religious in its atmosphere, and children would be brought under religious influence as they could be under no other circumstances.

But it would not be necessary to forego all the other services to which reference has been made. They would be all the more appreciated and the better sustained by reason of the influences of all these family altars, as would be all the other public services of the sanctuary. A community can be no better than its homes, and a church often lacks spirituality because its homes are deficient in divine grace. Where parents lead their children to serve God, the pastor can lead the community to follow him. But however good and pious the pastor may be, he is sure to be weak if the parents are not upholding his hands by piety at home, as Aaron and Hur upheld the hands of Moses.

If the people of this age want a real revival, let them commence working for it and praying for it at home, with their children gathered about them in the exercises of family prayer. God blessed the house

of Obed-Edom while the Ark of the Covenant abode under their roof, and he will still bless the homes where he is loved and honored, as he can not bless "the families that call not upon his name." The Jewish fathers were to hold the Passover service in their homes, and they were to explain to their children what they meant by the service, and out of that fact grew up a whole nation that was knit together as one great homogeneous people. If fathers would oftener explain to their children what is meant by the great services and sacraments of our evangelical faith, there would be more to follow Jesus Christ as the Lamb of God who taketh away the sins of the world.

Many fathers excuse themselves from holding family worship by saying that they are so hurried that they do not have time. There is certainly some time during the whole twenty-four hours of each day when the entire family could be gathered together for five or ten minutes. Presumably it is just before breakfast or just after the evening meal. Let all assemble gravely for a little time. Let a passage of Scripture be read aloud by the father, or by the family alternately, or in unison, and then, kneeling down, let a short prayer be addressed to God, thanking him for his mercies and

beseeching him for continued protection, forgiveness, guidance and grace, closing, if desirable, with the Lord's Prayer in unison.

Such scenes as this, depicted, as we find it, in Burns' "Cotter's Saturday Night," made Scotland great as a God-fearing people, or occurred because her people were and have been God-fearing. We must make a new effort to establish, or to re-establish, family worship in all our families. We can not afford to do without it in one single Christian home. Dr. Francis E. Clark, as he works along the line of pledges, has suggested the following, which it would be well for every family to take if they are not already in the practice of that which we have been urging: "Trusting in the Lord Jesus Christ for strength, we will endeavor to maintain family worship in our home, and will strive to make it, through kindness, courtesy and mutual helpfulness, a household of God." There is no question as to the desirability of it, and there is not a shadow of doubt that a blessing would follow its adoption.

THE USE OF THE BIBLE.

Many a battle has been fought over the Bible, and it is still defended with old-time loyalty and zeal. Against the attacks of unbelief its friends and advocates have marshaled facts and arguments from history, from experience and from the very nature of the Book itself. It sounds as if it had come from God. Its work and influence have been that of a divine book. There is no other book on earth that sounds as though it had come from heaven. There is no other book that has so mightily wrought for good among men. Wherever it has gone it has lifted men up morally, spiritually, intellectually and physically. Wherever people have accepted its help it has made them great. It saves men now, and promises an eternal salvation through faith in Jesus Christ. We believe it. We are going to stand for it, and believe it, and defend it.

It is a great and divine instrument. It is a sword with which to fight battles against sin of every sort. It is a plow with which to break up the soil of human

hearts so that God's Spirit may commence the vital process there that leads on to the harvest of salvation. It is a fire and a hammer to break down and destroy the hardest and stoniest opposition. It is an instrument ordained by God and used by the skillful to reach the souls of men, and make them wise in the things of eternal life. It is great and valuable, and is worthy of our supreme efforts to guard and defend it.

But it is not simply to be defended. It is for use, constant, wise and diligent. The sword that simply hangs in the armory is a mere relic, and the Bible is more than a relic. The plow that stands under shelter is in danger of rust and decay, but the Bible is for daily use. We are to do a great deal more with the Bible than to show the reasons for our belief in its divine origin. We are to put it to the uses that God intended when he sent it into this world as an instrumentality to be employed in saving men.

A good place to use the Bible is in our own private reading and daily life. Of course, if we believe it, and it is concerned with matters of such great importance, we shall read it, and read it often and much and thoroughly. Are there any

of us who have not read it through and through? And we shall want to obey it and live by it, too. Whatever light on our daily living it gives us we shall want to accept. What shall we think of ourselves if we are full of fiery zeal in defending the Bible, and yet do not live up to what it tells us as to daily duty, in all things, great and small?

Another good place to use the Bible is in our homes. The good old custom of family worship must not be neglected. Wherever it is forgotten there is reason for solicitude and anxiety. Our homes must rest on a sure foundation or they are in danger. Our families must be taught of God or they will grow up to be godless. Our households must have the life of God in their hearts or they are without the vital power that shall enable them to get the victory over the world, the flesh and the devil. However much infidelity there may be in the world, let us use the Bible in our homes, and not let it be crowded out by the daily paper, the latest novel, or the demands of business or of social life.

Another good place to use the Bible is in the Sabbath-school. Whether it is read in the public school or not, there is no rea-

son why it should not be in the Sabbath-school. The lesson-leaf is good in its way, and the lesson-text printed on it is the Word of God, but it is a good thing for every member of the school to have the Word of God, in its entirety, in hand, and it is good that its great and wholesome truths shall be taught in their simplicity and their fullness.

And still another place to use the Bible is in the pulpit. Let every minister handle the Word of God as authority. The Bible is the great source of fact, argument, illustration and exhortation for the pulpit. He who makes much of it is wise. He who makes much use of it will be much used of God. He who puts much honor upon it will be much honored of God.

Let us be zealous in our defense of the inspiration of the Holy Scriptures, but let us be equally zealous in putting them to the use that they were intended for, and let us be sensitively resolved to obey their divine teachings and to live by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.

SABBATH OBSERVANCE

The law of the Sabbath is as binding to-day as it ever was, and as binding as any one of the ten commandments. These all define duties of such universal application, founded on the essential nature of things and growing out of the very necessities of our nature, that the obligation to respect and observe them is a worldwide and changeless obligation. In no dispensation, under no condition, in no land or age, can it ever be right to kill, to steal, to lie, to be idolatrous or profane. And so in every condition, in every country and in every century, man needs the physical rest, the moral and spiritual uplift that comes from a proper observance of the Sabbath. No one of these commandments has ever been abrogated. In the very necessities of the case they can not be. They are each and all of them obligatory, and the law of the Sabbath equally with that against theft.

The first day of the week is observed by the Christian world as the Sabbath instead of the seventh day, as specified in the Fourth Commandment. To this a few peo-

ple who hold Christian views in general, object, and insist that we should all go back, as they have done, to the observance of the seventh day, or Saturday. We feel perfectly satisfied that we should not do so, the first day of the week being the Sabbath under the Christian Dispensation.

We believe unhesitatingly that, from the beginning of the world to the resurrection of Christ, God appointed the seventh day of the week to be the weekly Sabbath; and the first day of the week, ever since, to continue to the end of the world, which is the Christian Sabbath. Those who are rooted and grounded in this belief are in no danger of being swept away by the teachings of those who would go back to the seventh day. We find that the first day of the week, the day of Christ's resurrection, was the day for the outpouring of the Spirit on Pentecost, and the day for nearly all the religious services mentioned in the New Testament, except those occasions when the apostles went to the Jewish services in the synagogue to reason with the Jewish people out of their Scriptures and show them that Jesus was the Christ. Important religious duties were assigned to the first day of the week, thus

designating it as the day for public worship, and on this day John had his vision of the opened heavens and the glorified Savior.

Christ told his disciples to teach "all things whatsoever I have commanded you." These men were inspired by the Holy Spirit for teaching and writing the truth, and Christ promised them that the Spirit should bring to their remembrance whatsoever he himself had said to them. When we find these men, therefore, teaching doctrines in their addresses and epistles, we are not to think of these as being apart from the teachings of Christ, but a part of his teachings. The Gospels record some of Christ's words; the epistles give us a large insight into his teachings. The apostles, writing under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, who guided them into an exact remembrance of Christ's words, were made the very mouthpiece of Christ himself. The change of the Sabbath from the seventh to the first day of the week was made in apostolic times, and is distinctively indicated in the books of the New Testament. The attempt to dis sever apostolic teachings and practices from those of Christ, and to make them of less authority

than his own, is an insult to Christ instead of an honor, and is a distinct discrediting of the Holy Spirit. Here, then, is the origin of the use of the first day of the week, and there is no possibility of going back to the seventh day without turning our backs upon that which connects our faith with our risen Lord.

There is strong, safe ground to stand on in observing the first day of the week as we do. Christ is Lord of the Sabbath. He said that he was. He changed the day by directing his disciples to observe the day of his resurrection, the Lord's Day, as the Christian Sabbath. We observe it thus, and as we trust Christ alone for our salvation, and receive help from him to live as his children, we strive to keep each one of his holy commandments and thus adorn the doctrine of God our Savior.

The Word of God is sufficiently explicit as to the nature of the Sabbath and the manner in which it is to be observed. It is a holy day. It is set apart for a holy use. It is to be devoted to the interests of our souls. Religious life and culture are to have their opportunity, especially on this day. It is a day in which we are to rest from all work save that of necessity and mercy. So far as is practicable we are to

spend the day in the public and private exercises of God's worship. Thus the horizon of our thoughts is to be filled with God, and we are to seek to glorify him, and to become like him. There can be no higher conception of life than this.

It is well for us to call the Sabbath by its divinely designated name. We believe that the first day of the week is the Sabbath. Why not call it by its name? We say in our Shorter Catechism: "From the beginning of the world to the resurrection of Christ, God appointed the seventh day of the week to be the weekly Sabbath; and the first day of the week, ever since, to continue to the end of the world, which is the Christian Sabbath." If we believe it to be the Sabbath, as it is, why not call it the Sabbath, invariably, to emphasize the fact that our observance of it is rooted in the divine command? And yet the moral effect of this is continually dissipated, as people talk of "Sunday-school" and "Sunday rest" and "Sunday worship." The world is not going to have very much reverence for Sunday as such unless it be believed that it is the Sabbath of the Lord our God, and there is very little opportunity to make the world believe it is the Sabbath unless Christian people call it the Sabbath. Of

course the secular name of the day is Sunday, and it is an old heathen name that points back to ancestors who worshiped the sun and dedicated the first day of the week to its honor.

As Christians our first thought in all things should be the glory of God. We must make our stand here. We must be his witnesses. We must speak the language of his Word. It has long been borne in upon us that professed Christians weaken their foundations and give up their very principles when they permit themselves to be so secularized in thought and speech as to call the Sabbath by the name by which the world designates the day. Let us teach our children to speak of "Sabbath-school." Let the books and papers and conventions that designate it as "Sunday-school" be kept at a distance until they learn a proper reverence for the day. If we fight for the Sabbath as a holy day, let us fight for it on God's own ground.

PUBLIC WORSHIP.

Among the very highest privileges accorded to us, for our spiritual enjoyment and benefit, is that of public worship. Nothing can take the place of it. Where it is enjoyed, there is to be found worship intensified by our association with others who are like-minded, and there is social enjoyment elevated to the highest plane and sanctified by the brooding presence of the Spirit of God.

We need to worship. Apart from the fact that we owe it as a duty to God our Creator, is the corresponding fact that we need its subjective effects in our own soul. When we worship, we place ourselves directly and consciously under the personal influence of God, holding personal communion with him, and seeking the power of his own presence in our hearts. From every such act and exercise we go away spiritually uplifted and purified. To draw near to God is good for us, in every way and in every sense of the word. The true worshiper is elevated to a higher plane of ex-

istence, and is exhilarated and assured of his oneness with God in covenant and in communion.

The best forms of physical exercise bring delight and satisfaction to the body, and muscles, nerves and tissues are called to new health and enjoyment. The best forms of mental exercise secure rich returns to the thinker whose mental faculties are stimulated and quickened to larger powers of attainment and enjoyment by each hearty, healthful and honest exercise. So the true worshiper, as he closes his faculties to the outer world and draws near to God spiritually, finds a joy, a peace, a satisfaction, full of exhilaration and approaching ecstasy, as he realizes God's presence, and becomes filled with the fullness of God.

It is a delightful experience when two kindred minds hold mutual converse, and find in their association a pleasure that fills the fleeting hours with a glow of gladness. So when a pure and spiritually awakened soul draws near to God, there is a delight which transcends all other associations and experiences. It is this that characterizes the Christian's approach to God in prayer. So long as physical hunger

is satisfied by food, and mental hunger by the thoughts and words of other minds, so will the soul of man feel the need of prayer and worship, and will find relief and peace in its exercise. This is not imaginary. They who think that this experience is a fiction simply do not know the meaning of prayer. They have not learned to pray. They do not know how to pray.

Public worship is an intensifying of all this when the whole company present are true worshipers. When there are present those who are not worshipers, they may prove to be a distraction and an obstacle to others. Public worship gives the opportunity for many persons to be wrought upon by the same agencies of praise and prayer and spiritual instruction, under the leadership of those who are used by the Holy Spirit as the avenues for the communication of himself to his people. When all the conditions are secured, of time and place and leadership and sacred exercise and harmoniousness of spirit among all those who are present, God touches the hearts of his people as a skillful musician the chords of his instrument, and harmonies are evoked whose sweetness and power linger through the days to come.

There is nothing to take the place of true, public worship. God in his wisdom has ordained it, and his very ordaining it marks it as a gracious privilege as well as an imperative duty.

THE SPIRIT OF WORSHIP.

It should be the aim of all who attend the public services of the sanctuary to be in the spirit of true worshipers. All such God is seeking. When they seek God, there is a mingling of heavenly influences in the human soul, so that glory crowns the mercy-seat. Those who are devout will seek to put away earthly thoughts and cares, and to fix their hearts and minds upon spiritual things. They will not engage in ordinary conversation up to the very moment of public worship, but will seek for and promote a hush and quiet in the house of God previous to the opening of the service. Heart and mind will be able to take hold of God. Each part of the worship will be entered into with earnest devotion. The attention will not be easily attracted to trifles or directed from the sacred opportunities of the hour. A spirit of sweet seriousness will pervade the faculties. Prayer, praise, the reading and study of the Word of God, will all be engaged in as holy privileges, and when the hour has passed, it will be remembered as a time

when God flooded the soul with the charm of his presence.

It is incumbent upon each one who attends public worship in the house of God to conduct himself with propriety and reverence. Others have come to worship, and they must not be interrupted. To do so would be selfish and ill-mannered. It is robbery to interfere, in a concert, by light and trifling behavior, with those who have come anticipating real delight and profit in hearing the music, and it is worse to come between a soul and its worship in the sanctuary. Yet this is what is done by those who, by light and irreverent conduct, distract the attention which should be centered, undisturbed, on sacred things.

For one to engage in whispering, staring, reading, writing, smiling, laughing, sleeping, or other acts which are disturbing, is to do what is not only inappropriate, but disgraceful as well. There are many things done in church service that are rude and wrong. Sometimes we have known ministers to be inattentive to the singing, and to converse in the pulpit during this part of the service. Oftentimes members of the choir will smile and whisper during the sermon, the reading of the Scriptures, or even during prayer. Such

acts amount to sacrilege, the only excuse that can be made being that those who are guilty of it are ignorant or ill-bred.

How comforting and satisfying it is to attend a sacred service where everything is in good taste and full of the sweet and sacred spirit which should characterize God's house and its assemblies. From such a meeting the minister and his people go refreshed and uplifted. They have met with God. Human elements have not interfered or obtruded themselves. God has been met with, and his holy presence has been felt. It is to their souls as the water-brooks to the thirsty hart.

There have been instances of persons coming to God's house to scoff and remaining to pray, but usually when one comes in that frame of mind he is like the way-side on which the seed falls, only to be devoured by the fowls of the air. He who forgets the sacredness of time and place and occasion when God's people are met in the sanctuary for holy worship, and who mocks and scoffs, is in a condition scarcely to be graciously changed even by the Holy Spirit. Let one keep his foot and his hand and his lip when he comes into the house of God, and let him be more

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ready to hear than to offer the sacrifice of fools.

A very impressive admonition, often repeated, is to this effect: "Whoever thou art that enterest this sanctuary, leave it not without a prayer for thyself, for those who minister, and for those who worship here." It is worthy counsel. We should come into the house of God with the humble spirit of sincere worship in our hearts, and should engage in every act of the service with the earnest desire that our own souls may be spiritually enriched and that God may be glorified. With this as our animating purpose we shall find, in even the humblest sanctuary service, much to build us up in the inner life and to help us, in our outer life, adorn the doctrine of God our Savior.

It is a great thing to know how to conduct a public service so that it shall be conducive to the spirit of worship, and so that it shall lead the worshipers on, step by step and thought by thought, into the presence and grace of God. He who does it must be a man of God, accustomed to his presence, and loving to bring others within the range of his blessing.

It is a great thing to know how to retire

from the place of worship in such a way that its blessings may not be dispersed. To speak with kind and loving greetings to others and yet avoid the elements that jar on the life of the spirit; to cultivate quietness without appearing to be austere; and to show an interest in others without losing what the soul needs to carry away for itself. are, all of them, worthy of thoughtful attention that they may be attained, to the glory of God and the enrichment of the life of the worshiper.

CHRISTIAN FAITH.

*“Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy * * * mind.”—Mark xii. 30.*

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“Those things which are most surely believed among us.”—Luke i. 1.

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“Those things which are revealed belong to us and to our children.”—Deut. xxix. 29.

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“Take heed unto thyself and unto the doctrine.”—1 Tim. iv. 16.

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“We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen.”—John iii. 11.

AUTHORITY IN RELIGION.

An intelligent being believes what he has sufficient reason for believing. To believe on credible evidence is intelligent faith. To refuse to so believe is as unintelligent as to believe what there is no possible reason or excuse for believing.

But what shall we believe? What is to be the basis of our faith? What shall be the authority in accordance with which we shall shape our beliefs and our life? Upon our answers to these questions our religious status is to be determined.

What is God's will and what does he wish us to believe, and how does he expect us to live? Has he revealed himself to us authoritatively, so that we may know in regard to these vital matters? Have we any authority on these points which shall be to us an end of controversy? Is there any authority, or any actual basis for faith, in religious matters, or are we all at sea, each one believing as he may choose to believe? Is it possible, still further, that we are at the mercy of men who claim authority and the right to exercise it according to laws in their own keeping?

If each person is a law to himself, then religion is a mere emotional fancy or condition. If so, one form of religion is as good as another, or as bad as another. If religion be not the acceptance or maintenance of a definite relation to God, along the lines of a revelation of his will; if it is merely a self-originated emotion or a self-devised impulse to an exalted life, then it is certainly the most uncertain and indefinite thing in life, depending on taste and temperament, and of such a nature that there is no allowable censure for him who chooses to dispense with it altogether.

If, on the other hand, authority be lodged in any one man or body of men who demand and secure spiritual jurisdiction over our lives and our consciences, we are in a condition of absolute spiritual servitude. No more abject slavery could be imagined than that in which we should be fettered, and no more unbounded despotism could be devised than that which this class of men would be most likely to exercise. Men may submit themselves to a moral law, however rigorous, if they know that it is the law of God, and that all are bound by it, and if its limitations are well known. Men may accept spiritual teachings, even though mortifying

to their natural inclinations, if they know that they come from the infinitely wise and gracious God, who has in mind and heart the enlightening and saving of his creatures. But to be held in the power of men who enforce their own demands, claiming them to be God's latest revelations, is to be enslaved in a bondage which means the galling and deadening of every part of the being.

But we believe that God has revealed his will in a Book which may be read and known by us all. We have satisfying proof that the Scriptures are the Word of God. We believe that God there teaches. It is intelligent faith to believe the teachings of God's Word. To be guided by them is the part of the highest wisdom. To reject them is the greatest mistake that can be made by any human being. This Scriptural faith is reasonable; it is safe; it is the way of true liberty of life and of conscience. Others may help us to understand God's Word, but there is no authority in any such assistance. No creed, no confession, no sermon, no commentary or explanation has in itself authority, its only semblance of authority being its faithfulness to the truth in its interpretation of God's Word. No man, no class of men, no organization, can

have final power over any soul, God himself being the one to whom each one is finally and supremely accountable.

The Bible, and the Bible alone, is the formal source of authority in religion for those who would be strong and secure in their faith; who would be delivered from the fanciful and fantastic, from the despotic and tyrannical. To know and follow Christ as he is revealed in the Word by the Spirit means to accept the highest and sole authority in religion and to be free from sinful and human bondage.

OUR INFALLIBLE GUIDE.

We believe the Scriptures to be the Word of God, the only infallible rule of faith and practice, and that nothing will ever be found to contradict or set aside their plain and intended meaning. Being from God it is truth. With it nothing can conflict, since truth is always the will of God, on any subject or in any department of his creation. God being the author of truth, we can be sure that he will never contradict himself. For instance, there can never be anything in real science to contradict the real teachings of God's Word.

What the Word of God distinctly teaches we are to accept unquestionably, and we are to believe and obey without a thought of hesitation. Whatever is in conflict with this teaching we are to reject. Where we have no positive, explicit teaching on any point, we are to be guided by the spirit of the Word and are to be careful that whatever conclusions we arrive at shall be in perfect harmony with the divine teachings. There are very few points where there need be any hesitancy, and the intelligent, prayerful and reverent student of

the Holy Scriptures will always be able to know his duty in any circumstances of life.

Standing right here we are secure. We have authority, open and accessible to all, for what we believe and enjoin. We are free from the uncertainties that arise from conflicting authorities. We know that we have the last word spoken on the great subjects of faith and life, and that no one can come to us with rightful claim of having a more recent proclamation or decision from God.

The Roman Catholic Church claims to believe the Scriptures, but no one may positively know what else it believes or what is the latest phase of its interpretation. It has a great mass of apocryphal writings which are placed on a par with the canonical Scriptures, and a great body of tradition which must be respected by its teachers and members, and there is no final interpretation until it comes from their "infallible" Pope. No one is safe in his faith under this system. There may always be some later returns to set at naught the conclusions at which he has arrived.

In the growth and development of the work of the Church new methods may call for adoption which are not exactly named

in the Word of God, but the thing in essence may be there without any doubt. Thus the Sabbath-school and its usual officers are not named in any of the sacred books, but the religious instruction of the young is there directed positively, and in the divine Providence the most effective method is, unless some law be overlooked or disregarded, the nearest to the divine provision. Missionary societies and boards, theological seminaries and religious colleges, family worship and other forms of Christian work and service may not be mentioned by name in the Scriptures, but they are there in their real essence, and as we use them with consecrated purpose we do the will of God in harmony with the revelation of his will.

As to the doctrines we believe and teach, we are to be guided by what we find on the sacred page. Here we discover all that God sees we really need to know. Let us be reverent students, praying as we read that he who inspired the message may shine upon the page and may shine into our hearts so that in his light we may see light, and may know and understand the truth as it is in Jesus.

There is great satisfaction in the study of the Scriptures. Here is a mine of inex-

haustible information as to matters of the profoundest importance. Here we learn what God has taught us as to himself and ourselves; of our sinfulness and of his holiness; of his holy laws bearing on every department of our life, and of his redemption of grace whereby he restores his people and leads them in the way of salvation. Here are revealed to us what we need to know of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, of life and death, of heaven and hell. Here shines divine light on the believer's daily pathway, showing him how to walk and pray and do God's will. Here we learn of Christian life and work and of the ordinances of God's house. Sufficient is the Word of God as a lamp to our feet and a light to our path in all our earthly pilgrimage.

WHAT IS GOD?

There can be no perfect definition of God for, being infinite, he can not be defined. There have been many attempted definitions, but they are all necessarily imperfect. We have only a partial knowledge of him, and even if he were to make a complete revelation of himself, we should not be able, with our finite powers, to grasp the infinite truth. We are to be very reverent when we undertake to tell of God.

It would be very incorrect, however, should we say that we know nothing of God. We do know many great and glorious truths about him. He has seen fit to reveal himself to us in many gracious ways. He has manifested himself to us in Creation, in Providence, in the Holy Scriptures, in Christ and through his Holy Spirit, and we know so much about him and about the duty we owe to him, that if we do not love and obey him we shall be left without excuse and be involved in eternal ruin.

God is the great uncaused first-cause and the uncreated source of all that exists. He is our Creator and our Preserver. The

universe is the work of his own hands. He spake and it was done; he commanded and it stood fast. The Scriptures do not undertake to prove that God exists or to tell us how he came to exist. In the very first words that are recorded his being is sublimely postulated in the magnificent announcement: "In the beginning God created."

God is a Person. He is not merely a power at work in the heart of things, a tendency, an impulse, the life that is everywhere manifest, in the atoms of the vegetable and animal streams of existence. Nor is he merely the power that works invisibly and impersonally to promote the cause of righteousness, according to an unerring law that makes the right to succeed in the long run. People sometimes talk very vaguely, endeavoring to banish God as a person from the universe, and yet under the cover of polite words that will veil their atheistic attitude and spirit. God is a person who, with a wise plan and a gracious purpose, an infinitely loving heart and an inflexible will, is ruling the universe, material and spiritual, which he himself created.

God is a Spirit. He is not limited by a body as are we. He is not circumscribed by conditions of time or place. He is

everywhere present. He is the same yesterday, to-day and forever. A thousand years are in his sight as one day, and one day as a thousand years. He is about us, and we can not perceive him with our bodily senses, and we can not elude him though we flee to the uttermost parts of the earth. The darkness and the light are both alike to him. The words of our mouth are known to him before they are uttered, and the inmost thoughts of our hearts lie open before the sight of him with whom we have to do. His judgments are unsearchable and his ways past finding out.

Outside the Holy Scriptures themselves, no more satisfactory or wiser words were ever framed in reference to the Supreme Being than the answer in the Westminster Shorter Catechism to the question: "What is God?" "God is a Spirit, infinite, eternal and unchangeable, in his being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness and truth." These were the words that came to the lips of George Gillespie, while leading the Assembly as it was bowed in prayer, asking for wisdom to frame a proper answer to this great question. They were accepted as an answer to the prayer and were adopted as an answer to the question, and no one has ever been able to

add or take away a word for the improvement of the definition as it was then adopted. These words are worthy of a place in our minds as an aid to us in our comprehension of him to whom we should render adoring and loving obedience.

This one only living and true God has made himself known to us as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. In his infinite, eternal and unchangeable spiritual personality we worship him with reverence and Godly fear, seeking to know and do his holy will. We are sinners by nature and he is holy; we are weak and he is almighty; we are ignorant and he is omniscient; we are little in all our being and faculties and he is infinite in all his attributes. But he invites us to come to him in repentance and seek his forgiveness; in faith and ask his justifying mercy; in trustful confidence and accept his gracious and eternal favor. So we come to him in the name of Jesus Christ, who has taught us to pray, saying, "Our Father which art in heaven."

CHRIST, THE ETERNAL SON.

Christ is to us the revelation of God. We find it said: "No man hath seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath revealed him." It is in the person of Christ, the incarnate God, that we learn what God is and what he wishes us to think of himself.

It is to be remembered that the manifestations or revelations of God have been made through the Second Person of the Trinity. Christ is called the Word because he speaks or makes known the eternal and infinite truth of the absolute God which we could never have known without such revelation, for "No man hath seen God at any time."

The Word spoke at Creation. This was Christ, the Second Person. "God said." That was the Word speaking. Creation was Christ's work. We read in Eph. 1. 16, "For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones or dominions or principalities or powers; all

things were created by him and for him." This is clear and plain. The universe in all its beauty and glory is an outgoing of the power and love of God through Christ the great Revealer and Manifester of God.

The Word spoke with especial clearness in the Holy Scriptures. Here we find God manifested. Here is a wonderful expression of the divine truth, in revealing the mind and will and character of God. If there had never been anything more than this, we should be utterly without excuse should we go on in sin against God. Christ, through the Holy Spirit, spoke to the prophets and apostles and evangelists, and guided them in making the record in this holy volume which is called with clear distinction, the Word of God.

But the Word spoke with the plainest revelation in the divine-human life of Jesus Christ. In his words and actions we learn as nowhere else the real life and character of God. We do well to be docile and reverent as we listen to him and look upon him. The life of God is manifest in Christ, and his life is the light of men, to shine into their hearts and on their pathways to show them the way to glory.

In Christ we learn that God is holy.

Everywhere through the whole of Christ's earthly life shone the light of perfect holiness. No one has ever dared to accuse him of wrong-doing. Even the worst enemies of the Gospel have never dared to speak one word of evil against Jesus. In his absolute consciousness of holiness he said himself: "Which of you convinceth me of sin?" He taught spiritual holiness, not a mere morality of life. He pleaded for a deep and sincere holiness of life and heart, so that we should be pure and loving in the very depths of our being where only our own eyes and the eye of God can search us.

In Christ we learn that God is loving. There is no mistaking this if we read what Christ said, and of what Christ did. We come to feel that Christ had a heart of tenderness infinitely more tender than human beings in their best conditions. He loved not only friends and neighbors, not only the helpless and friendless, not only the outcast and miserable, but the sinful and defiled. For them he was ready to give up his ease and comfort, and sacrifice himself to bless them. His life and words taught love to all the world and teach us still how God loves us.

In Christ we learn that God is just. The love of Christ was not weak amiability. It did not overlook the difference between sin and holiness. It did not express indifference as to moral distinctions. It sought to save sinners, but we were taught that sin is so hateful and so terrible a thing that in order to save men from it the Savior must die. On Calvary he did die, the Just for the unjust, that he might reconcile us to God.

The great truths of Creation, Providence, Revelation and Redemption come to us through Jesus Christ. We learn from him the holiness, love and justice of God, and we should be led by him to repentance, saving faith and adoring love.

SIN AND THE ATONEMENT.

Law has its penalties. It commands, but it threatens at the same time. If the command is not obeyed, or is disobeyed, the penalty follows. We disregard law then upon our own peril, and violation brings consequences that may involve us in great sorrow and pain and loss. He who violates the law as to fire is burned, and he who disregards the law of the attraction of gravitation may be crushed.

Human government could not exist without laws regulating the relations and dealings of men, and these laws have their penal sanctions, with officers and courts for passing judgment and administering penalties. If men were permitted to live and act as they chose, neither person nor property would be safe; violence would prevail; evil would reign, and society would be involved in ruin. Laws must be made and enforced to hold evil in check and to protect the innocent, defenceless and law-abiding.

The divine government can not exist without law. God is good, but he is wise

and he is just. In carrying on his moral and spiritual government wisdom and justice are as necessary as goodness. There could be no goodness without these other attributes, as without them his government would perish, and all would be involved in ruin.

Sin is a terrible thing. He who does not think so has no proper conceptions of right and wrong, of God's nature and authority, or of our relations and duties. Sin is rebellion. Sin is atheistic in its essence. It strives to rob God of his throne and crown. Sin is destructive to moral order, and if permitted to go on unrebuked and unchecked, would bring disaster and ruin to the universe. But sin will not go unpunished. God reigns and will reign and must reign. The soul that sins against him and his holy laws must die. But it is a terrible thing to receive the sentence of death and all are sinners. To punish all sinners would mean blackness of darkness eternal for all.

God is not willing that all should perish. He takes no pleasure in the death of any sinner, and would rather that each and all would turn to him and live. He cries from his loving heart, "Turn ye, turn ye,

for why will ye die?" He invites us to turn from our sins in repentance. If we only heed his words, we must be startled and led to realize our terrible condition. Why should we not be sorry for our sin, as well as horrified at the knowledge of the results of our sin? When we stop and listen to the pleadings and warnings of God we see that he is grieved over our course and our condition, and we see the terrible gulf yawning at our feet. If we will turn to God, he will forgive us, delivering us from the wrath to come, and taking us back to his favor.

But even God can not forgive sin without regard to its punishment. This would be to override law and set it aside at his arbitrary pleasure. No government could survive such a course. God does not attempt it. Jesus Christ has taken the place of the sinner. He has died in the stead of all those who will accept him as their substitute. He is just and holy, and the law had no claim upon him, and when he yielded himself as a sacrifice for sinners his infinite merits fully satisfied all the claims that Justice could have upon all finite ones who would come repentantly accepting his mercy. In his person the law was vindicated as holy, all just de-

mands against repentant and believing sinners were satisfied, and God is able in his love for sinners to pardon and accept and save all who come in the name of Christ.

No one claims to understand all the tremendous significancy of the Atonement. But we may accept Christ as our atoning Savior and feel and know that we are at peace with God. To this we are invited. The truth of the Atonement humbles man and exalts and glorifies God. It reveals him to us as unwilling that we should perish and devising means, at infinite cost to himself, for our salvation. If we disregard this saving love of God in Christ for us, we are lost without remedy. If we repent and believe, the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses us from all sin.

THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST.

The resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ from the dead was an expression of his almighty power. He had told the disciples that he had power to lay down his life and power to take it up again. After his resurrection they remembered that he had asserted this, and their faith in him was made all the stronger. There was a convincing proof of his divineness in his fulfillment of such a promise as this.

The resurrection of Christ convinces us also of the value of his death. It was to be an atoning death for his believing people. He was to be wounded for their transgressions and bruised for their iniquities, the chastisement of their peace was to be laid upon him and by his stripes they were to be healed. Christ's death was more than that of a good man. It was the death of the divine Son of God who came into this world to live and die for men. He was not simply a martyr who is assailed and persecuted and killed. He was the atoning Savior who, voluntarily and lovingly, died that we might live. Had he

not risen, his enemies would have rejoiced over his absolute defeat, and his friends would have sorrowed and cherished his memory. But Christ arose. He fulfilled every promise. He triumphed over death, the grave and his enemies. He rejoiced his followers, and has been their victorious leader and Lord.

The resurrection of Christ assures us that he is able also to raise us from the dead. We trust our future life to him without fear. We are sure that he who was able to rise from the grave is able to raise all those who trust in him. This is an immeasurable comfort. The grave is robbed of its darkness. Death is no king of terrors to us. When we die, if we are God's children, we know that we have been sent for by our Heavenly Father, and we go in the faith of Jesus to be forever with him who has power to deliver us from death and the fear of death.

When Christ was upon earth he raised many persons from death. There was the little maiden who had just died. There was the widow's son who was being carried to his burial. There was Lazarus, who had been dead for four days, upon whose flesh was already the inroad of corruption. We may believe there were others among the

many miracles of healing which he wrought, as well as among the saints who arose at the time of his crucifixion. All these were healed by a word. Each case was an absolute impossibility to any one else, but easy to him who had infinite power.

We believe, if we are God's children, that there is for us a future life of beauty and joy and holiness. We believe that if the divine life has been implanted in us, it will live on forever, and will come into the fullness and glory of the resurrected life, by the divine grace that comes to us in Jesus Christ. We believe this because we know that he arose from the dead, and that he ascended into glory, and that he has promised that where he is there his loved ones also shall be. In this hope we endure and rejoice.

Each Sabbath day impresses on our minds the truth of Christ's resurrection. Each Easter is an anniversary of this august event. It comes at the time when leaves and flowers and grass and buds are awaking after the winter's sleep. But Easter is more than a matter of poetry and nature. It is a time of great joy and beauty and hope in the natural world, but the spring comes even to those who know

not Christ. The great fact of Easter is that Jesus Christ rose from the dead, and that he has power to save and to bring with him into the everlasting life all those who love and trust him.

CHRIST EXALTED.

Christ's resurrection from the dead was the first element in his exaltation, or resumption of the eternal glory which he had with the Father. In the resurrection he was declared to be the Son of God with power. He had power to lay down his life as a sacrifice for sin, and now it was proved that he had power to take it up again. His death was not a triumph for his enemies. He was not merely an amiable but mistaken friend of sinners, nor a martyr to lofty theories and convictions. His resurrection was the vindication of his claim to be the Son of God, who died to give life to those who should believe on his name.

From this point everything was on the re-ascending scale. For forty days he remained upon earth, deepening, by many interviews with his disciples, their confidence in and their love and reverence for him as their risen Lord. Such were his revelations of himself to them and such his interviews and assuring communications, that they never could doubt that Christ

whom they had followed, and whose death they had witnessed, was indeed risen from the dead.

Christ's ascension at the end of the forty days was another element in his exaltation. He had simply tabernacled in the flesh for a time on earth, and now he ascends to his native home in the skies. While the eyes of his disciples were upon him, he was taken up and disappeared in the opened heavens, and as they lingered, still watching with longing eyes, the angels appeared to them and announced that he would in like manner come again. When he is to come again we know not, but we do know that he has gone to his home in heaven, there to prepare a place for his people and there to welcome them into his own holy presence, that where he is they may be also. Where heaven is we do not know, but we do know that it is where Christ is, and that he has been gathering his people there to be with him. Where Christ and his loved ones are is the heaven toward which our hearts turn in prayerful longing and joyous anticipation.

Christ's heavenly life is still another element in his exaltation. He has entered into heaven itself now to appear in the presence of God for us. Having offered his

one sacrifice for sin forever, he sat down on the right hand of God. In that place of highest honor and distinction he is our Prophet, whose words are being fulfilled on earth for the instruction and edification of his people; he is our Priest who was once offered to bear the sins of many and whose death and sufferings his people on earth are to commemorate until he comes again; he is our King, there executing his high office in subduing us to himself, in ruling and defending us, and in restraining and conquering all his and our enemies. He is our living and compassionate Savior, our sympathizing friend and helper, the prevailing advocate for all the sinful ones who come repentantly, pleading the merits of his great name. There in his exalted life "he is before all things and by him all things consist"; "for it pleased the Father that in him should all fullness dwell."

But Christ is to judge the world at the last day. He is to be the Judge of the living and the dead. We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ. The hands that were nailed to the cross of Calvary now hold the sceptre of universal dominion, and the voice that once said: "Come unto me all ye that are weary and

heavy laden, and I will give you rest," will on that day speak the words of welcome into the eternal joy of heaven, or will pronounce the final doom of the unrepentant that shall be for their banishment into everlasting perdition. Judgment is so terrible that it has been committed to the hands of infinite love. The love and grace of the Lamb of God are tender and saving, but those who trample upon them will some day cry to the rocks and the mountains to fall upon them and hide them from the wrath of the Lamb. Let us love and follow him, that we may meet him with gladness and enter into the eternal joy of our Lord.

THE HOLY SPIRIT.

Whenever we repeat the Apostles' Creed we say, "I believe in the Holy Ghost." In that brief statement of Christian faith there is no explanation or specification of what we believe in reference to the Holy Spirit, but the words involve faith in his existence and in his good and gracious work for and within us. The Scriptures have much to say of his person and work, and it is for us to be very reverent and worshipful before him, welcoming his presence and power in our hearts and lives, and rendering implicit obedience to his instructions and guidance as they come to us in his Word and his providential dealings.

The Holy Spirit is the third person in the Trinity, the same in substance with, and equal in power and glory to, the Father and the Son, possessing the same attributes and equally interested with them in the works of Providence and Redemption. He is the Person through whom life is communicated in the kingdoms of Nature and of Grace. He moved upon the face of the waters in Creation's dawn to bring life

and order out of chaos, and he moved upon the minds of holy men, so that they spoke and wrote the Words of God in the Holy Scriptures. Prophets and Apostles were inspired by him to write the Word of God, and he has providentially preserved it in its purity, so that it has come down to us to-day as the Holy Scriptures, which we are to search for God's message to our own souls. In the study of this sacred volume we may well pray for the illumination of the Holy Spirit who first inspired it, so that "in his light we may see light."

The Holy Spirit is the efficient source of spiritual life in each believer. He convicts men of sin, leads them to repentance, gives to them the new birth from on high, savingly unites them to Jesus Christ, gives to them the spirit of prayer and adoption, and awakens within them the glad assurance that they are the saved and accepted children of God.

The Holy Spirit dwells in the hearts of his people, making them to live in vital union with Jesus Christ and binding them together in his great Body, the Church, so that each spiritual member of the Church is, through the Spirit, one with Christ, the Head. He directs the life and work of the Church, calling and anointing his ministers

and other officers for their sacred duties, imparting needed grace to his people, giving efficacy to his Word, protecting and enlarging his Church, superintending it in its evangelistic and missionary operations, and bringing on the glorious consummation when his Church shall fill the whole earth and his people, at last, be brought into eternal holiness and happiness in heaven.

This is known as the Dispensation of the Spirit. There has never been a time in the history of the earth or the Church when the Holy Spirit was not active in the world as the source of all life and goodness, but he has been especially powerful since he was "poured out" on Pentecost according to the covenant of Christ and "the promise of the Father." We are to honor him in every way as the source of all spiritual grace and graces, but we are to remember that his great work in the Gospel was to be that of taking of Jesus and showing him to us. So we honor the Holy Spirit most when, in dependence upon him, we honor Jesus Christ most, and hold him up as the only Savior of sinful men.

As the Holy Spirit regenerates he also sanctifies. Each advance in the believer's life is to be by his grace and under his

guidance. He is the Paraclete, or Comforter, of Christ's Church and people. He is the Superintendent, as we may say, of present Christian life and work, carrying all on to completion. He seals believers unto the day of redemption. He may be grieved, but, although we read of the wrath of God, and even of the Lamb, we do not read of the wrath of the Holy Spirit. How shameful to do despite to his work! How careful should we be not to quench his operations in our hearts when he would lead us on to large usefulness in speaking and working for his cause! Day by day let us open our hearts and our lives to him, that we may know what it is to pray in the Holy Ghost and to be filled with all the fullness of God.

THE CHURCH.

The whole number of the saved who finally are to be gathered together in heaven constitute the Church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. To be a believing child of God is to be one of this number, a real member of this great church. Because it can not be thoroughly seen by mortal vision we call it the "Invisible Church." It is the Church as God sees it. Part of its membership are already in heaven; some are on earth. "Part of the host have crossed the flood, and part are crossing now." They come from every land and tribe and tongue and nation, but they will all be alike in being able to sing the song of praise: "Unto him who hath loved us and hath washed us in his own precious blood."

The Church as it exists on earth consists of all those who profess the true religion, together with their children. It is not confined to any one of the various bodies who profess adherence to Jesus, and who are engaged in proclaiming his Gosepl. These exist with more or less purity. Some hold

the truth with great steadfastness and purity of doctrine and life. Others are so impure as scarcely to merit the name of churches of Christ. Nevertheless, the Lord knoweth them that are his, and each person who believes in Christ should be a member of his visible church here on earth.

To his Church Christ has given an organization, as we may learn from the New Testament, with the ministry and other officers, sacraments and other ordinances, and has directed that his Word shall be preached and his work carried on, to the end that sinners may be saved and Christians may be edified, promising his presence and Spirit unto the end of the world. The Church then has an infinitely important place and mission, and is not to be considered as one of, or as on the same plane with, the human organizations which, however excellent and beneficent, may at any time have existence.

God has always had a church upon earth, and will preserve it, in spite of the errors and other impurities that may arise from within, and the persecutions that may assail it from without. It is the duty of all who love Christ not only to be members of his church, but to use all efforts to ad-

vance its interests, to hold and teach the truth in its purity, to stand fast in sincerity of heart and life, and to guard it against all enemies who, from within or without, shall rise up against it.

We are not to consider as a part of the true Church every organization that appropriates to itself the name of church. Some of these bodies are mere travesties or counterfeits, and from their grossness of life and repudiation of Christian doctrine, are to be opposed as injurious and misleading, and we are to do what lies in our power to deliver from them those who have been or who are in danger of being led into their bounds.

The Lord Jesus Christ is the only Head of the Church. The claims of the Pope of Rome to be the Head of the Church are utterly false, and the assumption of this, or of any other body, to be the only true church have no foundation whatever. The Presbyterian form of government is most nearly of all others conformed to the model found in the New Testament; its doctrine is Scriptural, its historic record is venerable, and its present life is that of loyal obedience to Jesus Christ, and while it has humble confidence that it is a part of the body of Christ on earth it would repudiate

with vehemence any claim that there are not other bodies that have a similar right to be so considered.

The true Christian will seek for a place in the church, will be faithful in attendance upon its services, will bring up his children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, and will give of his money, his time, his influence and his prayers for the strengthening and upbuilding of the cause of Christ on earth.

FAITH AND SALVATION.

The Gospel is God's offer of life to sinners. It comes in the name of Christ and makes a free offer of the most important thing that any human being can possibly ask or accept. It tells of God's willingness to pardon sin and to receive the sinner as his own child, entitled to the gifts of his grace here on earth and to a happy and holy immortality in heaven. It would seem that every person in the world would be swift to claim these offered blessings.

If the Gospel were an offer of material wealth, every individual within sound of it would claim its benefits within twenty-four hours. If one million dollars, or one thousand, were proffered, every one able to walk and talk would come and claim it forthwith. If the gift were one thousand acres of land, or one acre, each person within hearing would be the owner of land before the setting of the sun. But the salvation of the soul, imperishable riches and a title to the inheritance incorruptible, is worth infinitely more than any earthly possessions, and yet, in spite
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o! this, multitudes stay away and think they would be self-sacrificing and bidding adieu to all they hold dear should they give themselves to Christ.

If the Gospel were an offer of physical health, the race would be on its knees for it. Even the false and fanciful forms of religion that make claims to heal the body are sought after by multitudes that do not care for healing of the soul. Physical health is greatly desired, especially after it has been lost, and if the Gospel offered healing to the bodies of men as freely as it does to their souls, there would be none to refuse it. At the best, however, the body must soon crumble to the grave while the soul shall live on forever. How infinitely important is its welfare!

If the Gospel were an offer of earthly office or position, there would be a mad rush to seek and claim its benefits on the part of multitudes, many of whom seem to care nothing for the infinite honor that is offered to them by Christ. Many are the expressions used in the Word of God to describe the honor that is pressed upon us for our acceptance. To be the sons of God is to be princes, and we are even called "kings and priests unto God for-

ever." Thrones, crowns and kingdoms are spoken of as the future possessions of the glorified. We are to be heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, and our inheritance is to be grand and glorious. That there should be a moment's hesitation in seeking it, on the part of any one, is something that bewilders us as we contemplate such folly.

Jesus Christ comes with his offer of salvation to men and women, one by one, as he came, when on earth, to the sinful and distressed. He asks us each one to come to him, to repent, to believe, to be saved. In his spiritual eyes, sinful and worldly and impure and unbelieving souls are more distorted and pitiable than the physically sick and crippled. If we looked with his eyes, we would see sin as more distressing and lamentable than any form of sickness or deformity.

This is the day of salvation. Jesus Christ is passing by. Thousands and hundreds of thousands, all over the world, are turning to him and finding him mighty to save. Every one who is really saved comes to see that he is a miracle of God's grace and healing. He wishes to see others saved. He prays for them. He pleads with them.

He would bring them to Christ. But Jesus himself is seeking for souls with a love that will not forget or grow cold. He is calling and pleading with men and offering them life and salvation. "Will thou be made whole?" He offers the best thing in life, freely and in the most loving and gracious way. Each soul should accept him in simple faith, lovingly, trustfully, at once and forever.

PERSEVERANCE.

As one of the great doctrines of grace found in the Word of God and formulated in the great systems of truth and doctrine we often speak of the "Perseverance of the Saints." By this we mean that those who are brought savingly into the kingdom of God, being accepted for Christ's sake and regenerated and sanctified by his Spirit, "can neither totally nor finally fall away from the state of grace, but shall certainly persevere therein to the end, and be eternally saved."

This is a most strong and comforting doctrine, and long has been known as one of the "Five Points of Calvinism." It adds stability to the conception and to the experience of Christian life to know that one is in such living covenant relations with God that there is the certainty of continuing safe through time and through eternity. He who is thus assured stands upon a rock. He can not be moved. All that is best has already come into his possession. Other things may come and go but this, the best of all, the knowledge that

he is safe in God forever, abides. He may be tried and tempted, may have sorrows and troubles and struggles, but he is secure, and his heart abides in peace.

Such a conception of Christian life is immeasurably superior to any thought of it which considers as possible that a person may be safe to-day and lost to-morrow; that one may know of God to-day as covenant-keeping and to-morrow as forgetful of his pledges to his people. He who is sure that he is a child of God, and that he will so continue whatever may assail him, is lifted up above all the temporal and passing ills of life. He draws his comfort not from himself, or his own resolutions or feelings or experiences, but from the infinite source of all strength and goodness. He is not greatly affected by the passing ills and trials of life. He is secure in God, as the one who rides on the mighty steamer is secure from the winds and waves that howl about him.

But it is not simply a comfort, and superior to other views in its effect upon the mind and heart of the believer. It is the truth of God. It is not a mere bit of logic and philosophy and rhetoric. It is not a mere matter of feeling secure and happy. It is a part of God's own revelation of his

grace toward his people. Christ says of his flock: "They shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand." Of all that Christ has he loses none. Not one of his loved ones is to perish. Some go cut and go away from him, but it is because they are not of him, and thus they make it manifest that they are not his. When people perish it is because they have no interest in Christ and never had. For they who are really saved endure to the end. They who are really born again have the life of God within, and they can not fall and perish because they are born of God. They are in covenant with God and they can not perish, because his promise never can be broken.

God is not only one who seeks and saves, but one who keeps. The keeping power of God is as precious to us as is his saving power. The perseverance of the saints is only another word for the perseverance of God. We believe in God and we trust him. If we accept his salvation, we accept him as the one who saves us and who keeps us, and because he lives we shall live also. The security of the believer is not simply in the strength of his renewed will and affections with which he grasps the hand of God in a pure love and a holy resolution,

but in the strength of the Lord who clasps his hand and holds him in a mighty, loving grasp that will never unfasten to let him go. Here is his safety. 'The Lord is his keeper and he keeps him to the end

IMMORTALITY AND HEAVEN.

What a marvelous message of life and comfort and power comes to us in the fact of Christ's resurrection. As we regard it with spiritual attention it almost overwhelms our senses with its majesty and glory. It has a most sublime significancy. It rises with august grandeur. The very gates of paradise open before us. A breath comes to our inner life from the very gardens of God.

Does death end all? Is the grave the end? Is the coffin to be the narrow room to contain all that is to remain? Human knowledge can not give assurance as to these things. We wish and long for the immortal life. We pray and imagine and dream. Is it all poetry? Is it all an unfounded and imagined hope? Is there anything beyond the curtain that drops in its awful, sable blackness, when comes the parting at the hour of death? We have seen no one; we have heard no one; we have communicated with no one, who has gone from us into the shadows of death.

So far as our own personal knowledge is concerned, we have none.

But Life and Immortality are brought to light in the Gospel. God has revealed to us that of which we could know nothing were it not for his Word. He has made us sure that there is another life beyond this; or, rather, that this life goes right on, without interruption, through the grave. Death ends only the body. The grave becomes its receptacle, but the spirit that has found life and salvation through faith in Jesus the Savior, goes right on and up to be forever with the Lord. This assurance is given, with more or less fullness, in nearly every book of the Bible. It is found with clearness especially in the New Testament. We see Moses and Elias coming back to earth to talk with Christ of his atoning death. We see the heavens opened to the vision of John the beloved disciple, and the other world becomes as real to us as the one where we dwell. For this we take his word as one who witnesses to us from God.

But Jesus Christ rose from the dead here on earth and walked for forty days in the sight of men. This is actual history. If it be not history, there is nothing in all

that is known as history that may be depended on. If we are not sure that Jesus rose from the dead, we are not certain that Charlemagne ruled, or that Cromwell lived, or that Milton wrote. But we are sure. We have the proof of indubitable testimony. It is not the record of a vision or series of visions. It is the record of what men and women by scores and hundreds saw and heard. Jesus arose and lived again among men. By this he proves his power over death and the grave. And he says that this same power is to be exerted in favor of those who trust and love him. His miracles and his own rising from the dead assure us that he is able to do for us all that he ever promised, and all that we ever long for.

Christ's rising from the dead is more than this. It is the absolute assurance that he is able to save us to the uttermost, through the justifying grace of his atoning death. He died for us to atone for our sins. He was not merely a martyr. He was not overwhelmed and beaten down in discharge of duty or in loving devotion to his people. He accomplished our pardon. He went down into death and the

grave for us. His rising from the dead was the victorious return from that sacrifice in which he baffled forever the enemies of our peace.

He arose from the dead and he proved that his death was an atoning sacrifice, and not a defeat. He lives, and we have a Savior whose death was for our salvation. He lives, and we shall live also. The grave becomes a gateway into glory. Death is vanquished. The victory belongs to Christ and his people forever. Heaven lies just beyond the curtain. There is Christ, and there are the many mansions he has gone to prepare, and there his people are being gathered one by one. Thanks to God who giveth us the victory! Because Christ lives, and where he lives, we shall live for evermore.

The Christian life is one of hope for the future. We look forward with glad anticipations. We are freed from all uneasiness. We are drawing near to the other world, not as those who wait for the night to come and end the day, but as those who see the morning coming to end the night. Doubt is vanquished. Darkness is banished. The eternal morning is coming. We are victors, and more than victors,

through him hath gotten the perfect victory over everything we dread.

We are assured in the Word of God that, if we are Christ's, we are already living the lives of the risen. We do not wait for the Judgment Day in order to be vindicated, for we are already pardoned and saved. We do not wait for heaven in order to come into peace and assurance. We are already risen. We have had spiritual resurrection. We are free from the death of sin. We are God's risen children. We love him, and trust him, and hope in him, and serve him. We breathe the air of a perpetual Easter and joy in the abiding gladness of a life that is for evermore to be hid with Christ in God.

CHRISTIAN SERVICE.

*"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy * * strength."*—Mark xii. 30.

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"I delight to do thy will, O my God."—Psalm xl. 8.

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"Be ye doers of the word and not hearers only."—James i. 22.

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"Whosoever heareth these sayings of mine and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock."—Matt. vii. 24.

CHRISTIAN MORALITY.

The true Christian makes it the studious effort of his life to do what is right. He tries not only to avoid doing what is wrong, but to do, positively, the things that are right and good. Thus his life is useful, glorifying God and blessing his fellow men. He leads what is known and recognized not only as a consistent life, but a life of Christian service. A contrary course would give occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme. The good and consistent life adorns the doctrine of God our Savior.

The standard by which his life is regulated is the perfect law of God. The Jewish standard of weights and measures was kept in the Temple. The one perfect law of life and morals for our continual guidance is found in the changeless Word of God. If anything in daily life agrees not with this Word, it is because there is no light in it. God's law is the guide. It tells us what is right and good, and what God expects and has a right to expect from us.

Men have shown themselves, in their sinful state, not able to keep this law. It has condemned them by showing up their imperfections. The sinful life is an immoral life. It is unspiritual and is a departure from the will of God.

Gospel grace comes, however, to enable men to obey God's will and to do right, and where it is accepted and men walk humbly before God, they are able, by the divine grace, to live in a way that glorifies God. This is Christian morality. It trusts in Christ. It accepts the indwelling and gracious guidance of the Holy Spirit. It honors and magnifies the law of God. It delights to do the will of God and lives with this as its abiding purpose.

It will be clearly seen that Christian morality is very different from that attitude so often taken by worldly men when they say: "I believe in living a moral life, in doing right and in doing good, but I do not feel called on to be religious or to be associated with the Church." This is a rejection of the counsel and commandments of God. It is self-righteousness. The standard set up by God is abandoned, a human rule of life is accepted, and there is no certainty as to what such a person

may call right or wrong at any time, nor is there any assurance that he will do even what he thinks to be right. In order to a good life we need to accept God's inflexible standard; we need a nature made to be in harmony with God by regeneration, and we need the continual constraining grace of God in our hearts. Even at the best God's people do not lead perfect lives. In an exceedingly dangerous condition, then, is the one who does not, and will not, accept God's helping hand.

It is not claimed that the every-day life of every irreligious man is grossly immoral, nor that every professed Christian lives in perfect consistency, unblemished by any imperfections or deviations from the standard laid down in God's law. But we are bound to acknowledge, according to the inspired teaching of the apostle, that those persons are very far astray who go about to establish their own righteousness, and who have not submitted themselves to the righteousness of God. The attainments of the truest and purest Christian are in his own estimation only as "filthy rags" compared with "the robe of Christ's righteousness" in which he seeks to be arrayed, but, if this is so, the best morality of the

Christless soul must be worse than this in the clear vision of God.

The true Christian will often read and will be guided by the spirit that is expressed so clearly in the epistle of James. He will not be satisfied with a Christian Experience, however pleasing, unless he is led into the works which prove practically that he is a child of God. He will not rest on the fact that he has accepted the attitude of Christian Worship in reference to God in his Church and holy ordinances unless he is also disposed to show the fruits of righteousness in his life. He will not pride himself upon the orthodoxy of his Christian Faith unless he is willing to have also an orthodoxy of life and Christian Service, without which the other, being alone, is dead. But he will strive, by the grace of God, for that consistent obedience or morality which will manifest that he loves God with heart, soul, mind and strength, in the ways of experience, worship, faith and service. Thus will he live as a Christian, not as a worldling; not a one-sided life, but the life of the four-square Christian.

GLORIFYING GOD.

In order to glorify God one must be and must do what God designs and desires. He must carry out God's purpose in his creation. He must do what God intends him to do. Thus a telescope by means of which the astronomer sees the heavenly bodies adds glory to the maker of the instrument. The elegant building adds glory to the architect and builder. No one may add glory to God, but each one may manifest some of the glory that is his and that he displays in all his works of creation and grace.

A sinner is a sinner all the time, until he is saved. If he is not saved, he remains a sinner, and while he so remains he is a sinner while he is asleep and while he is awake, while he speaks and while he is silent, while he plays and while he works. A thief may not be stealing all the time, but he is a thief all the time. A liar may not lie every minute, but he is a liar all the time. A sinner may not be doing wicked things every minute, but he is a sinner all the time. It is in this sense

that the Bible says that the plowing of the wicked is sin.

So, on the other hand, and in a correspondingly high and important sense, a true Christian is a child of God all the time, at night and by day, at home and abroad, at church and in place of week-day work and duty. At all times and in all places he is God's child. He may not be worshipping all the time. It is impossible for him to pray all the time, or to read the Bible or even to think of God and eternal things all the time, but he is continuously a child of God, and at every moment and in every place he may and should glorify God.

Every Christian should make it the rule of his life to do everything he does in just the way that God wishes him to do it. In this way he is himself kept in a conscientious and consecrated line of life, and he is showing to those around him how God expects life to be lived. The flower that blooms in its fragrant beauty reveals to us some of God's beautiful thoughts and is to us a call to a true and beautiful life.

We must never permit ourselves to think that some of our duties are religious and some of them secular. If we are God's children, they are all religious. They may

not all be worship or prayer, but they are all religious if we are trying to glorify God in both our bodies and our spirits. If we are mere worldlings, then everything we do is secular. We may do some very nice and pleasant and elegant things, but there is not one of them in which we are simply and lovingly trying to please God. And this is essential. It is the mark of a Christian.

All honest men are not Christians, but all Christian men are honest. All truthful men are not Christians, but all Christian men are truthful, and so in the same way they are pure and kind and upright and in possession of the graces without which it is not possible to see and serve God. If all men were true-hearted and sincere followers of Jesus Christ, all the evil things would die out of the world. Wars would cease. Intemperance would be no more. There would be no dishonesty in business. Men would work industriously and joyously. Overreaching and fraud would never be seen.

It is our duty in this world not simply to make money, winning wealth and fame and power, for we may fulfill the great ends of life with only a small portion of these. But it is our duty to serve God, to obey

his laws, to enter his kingdom, to live for the highest and holiest ends, and to win those around us to the life of salvation.

If we know our duty and do it not, we shall make a terrible failure of life. The one who is invited to an interest in Christ but fails to accept him, makes himself an eternal castaway. The one who, being saved, does not do his whole duty in trying to save others, is guilty of a great wrong, and he will have a terrible charge to meet when he stands before the bar of God.

A man was proven guilty of manslaughter not long ago in a court and was sentenced to severe punishment. What had he done? He had stood and had seen a fellow-man drown when he might have saved his life. He allowed him to perish, within personal sight and reach. The man knew he could have saved him had he tried. His conscience, unless it was seared, must have reproved him all the rest of his life.

We are saved in order to save others. The engineer is on the engine of the express train not simply that he may have a ride from one city to another, but that he may conduct the whole company of passengers safely to their destination. A physician does not simply try to preserve his own health, but he is depended on by the

whole community to save them from the power of disease, and he will not run even when the disease is a contagious fever. If we are Christians, we must bring others to a knowledge and acceptance of Christ.

Many have seen a picture of a woman in a stormy sea clinging to a cross by means of which she is saved from the waves. But there is another picture, which we all like better, of a woman saved from drowning because she holds to a cross with one hand while, with the other hand, she holds another woman and saves her. This is the way we should all strive to live. We are saved in order to save others. While the world is full of those who are perishing we shall be held responsible if we do not what we can to rescue them.

Let us show by the very spirit and manner we carry into our daily duties that we are animated by the spirit that is from above, and in all honesty and gentleness and reasonableness glorify our Father who is in heaven.

FAITH AND PRACTICE.

We heard, not long ago, a very ill-advised remark from a speaker who thought he was making a practical and pious utterance. He said: "I love religion and flowers, but I detest botany and theology." The fact is that ignorance never yet added to one's capacity for real enjoyment. He might as well have said: "I love music, but I do not know one tune from another; I love paintings, but I can not tell colors apart; I love books, but I absolutely hate the drudgery of reading them." He who really loves flowers will love them all the more as he comes to understand the symmetry of their construction and the laws for their classification, entering thereby into sympathy with their divine Creator in his work as the artistic source and organizer of beauty. He who is really religious may be all the more so as he studies the systematic and well-ordered body of truth placed in the Word of God under the inspiring direction of the Holy Spirit. God who made the flowers loves them better than any human being does,

and he who inspired the Scriptures is the One who is perfectly holy and happy in all his infinite life.

The true child of God is the only one who lives or who can live the Christian life. Only the fig tree produces figs. No other tree does or can produce them, but by the very law of its being it can and must. Christian faith lies at the very heart and source of Christian practice. As a man thinketh in his heart so is he. From the secret sources of his inmost life proceeds its outward expression in words and actions. The nature of the tree unfolds itself in foliage, blossom and fruit, and the law of its life will govern all that it produces. So the true Christian will show that he is controlled and dominated by the law of the Spirit of Life.

There may be an external life which is artificial, as a tree may be decked out with artificial blossoms. The tree that is so decorated is readily detected by all except the very inexperienced. The man whose life is that of merely outward Christian form may have a fair appearance, but he can not deceive God who knows the heart. Men may sometimes do very well because they have been raised well and surrounded by good influences, but unless one has

within his own heart the vital principle of a regenerated life the good that he has inherited or been taught will become a spent force, like a cannon ball that loses its momentum after it has been started by a force not its own.

The way to bring the whole world up to the plane of true Christian living is to bring it to an acceptance of the Gospel of Christ. There will never come a time when the life of the world will be right until it comes to know and believe and obey Jesus Christ. Make the tree good in order that its fruit may be good. Make the world's faith right and its life will be right. To this end Christian missionaries are going into all lands carrying the message of life through the divine Redeemer. The lands where there is the best like are those in which there is most acceptance of Christ. The worst lands, and the most dangerous to life and property, are those in which there is the least of the Gospel.

The stream can never rise higher than its fountain. No life can be Christ-like unless the love and life of Christ are in the heart. We must preach the Gospel if we would make use of the agency devised by God for man's salvation. We must accept

Christ as our own Savior if we would be saved, and unless we are saved we can not live the life of the children of God.

The law of cause and effect is in force not more in the physical world than in the spiritual world. If we have only the life of the flesh in our souls, we shall live after the flesh, but if we have the God-given and new-born life of the soul within us, we shall be able to live as those who love and follow after the things that are above.

EASY TO DO RIGHT.

When Christ tells us that his yoke is easy and his burden is light, he means that it is easy to do right. A good many people do not think it is. They think, and say, that it is a terribly difficult thing to do what one ought to do. They think it very trying to have to do one's duty. They think sin is very alluring and righteousness very severe. Whenever people talk in this way, however, they are contradicting Christ, and are showing that they have neither the wisdom nor the knowledge to make them safe guides or associates.

If one is really sensible and well-informed, he knows it is a great deal easier, in the long run, to do right and secure the results, than to do wrong and reap the consequences. "Oh," says some one, "perhaps it is if you include all the future consequences." Well, and why should we not include all the future consequences when we consider such a matter? Is it not wise and prudent? Do not all wise and prudent people do so? Of course they do. So, we

say, as sensible people always have and will, that it is much easier to do right than it is to do wrong.

It is easier and better for a boy to be studious and industrious in his boyhood than it is to be lazy and trifling. The days and years of boyhood will soon be gone. He who has formed correct habits, and who has come, through discipline and training, into the days of a competent and useful life, will be an honored and successful man. Far easier, taking a whole lifetime into consideration, is it to form industrious habits than to be self-indulgent and slothful in youth.

It is easier and better for any man to be honest and truthful and upright and pure, than to become involved in the meshes of sin and vice and crime. Oh, the shame and sorrow and confusion that come to those who violate the plain laws of God. The forger thinks it easy to get money by the mere writing of another man's name, but the detection and disgrace and punishment that follow make a crushing load. The robber and the gambler find it easy to pick up the property of some victim, but it would be a thousand fold easier to earn it

than to meet with the fate of the thief, which will come upon them.

Sin is the worst folly of which a rational being can be guilty. He who violates the laws which have been made by God and by human society, is not only going counter to the best judgment in the universe, but is making an enemy out of mighty forces that are pledged to the enforcement of the laws that have been made. A man may disregard the law of gravitation and leap from a precipice, but he will suffer without fail. He may disregard the laws as to poison, but the poison will grapple with him and demand his life. He may set at naught the laws as to purity and goodness, but, if he does he will go down to moral and physical putrescence.

Saul was a mighty man, but God was Almighty, and when Saul fell into the fatal folly of matching himself with God, in disobedience, he had to lament: "I have played the fool and erred exceedingly." David was a great king, but when he allowed himself to fall into a pit of sin one day, the rebuke he received, and the consequent shame and sorrow, made him realize that the way of the transgressor was not easy, but exceedingly hard. It may

seem to be easy, at the time, to evade responsibility, to shirk duty, to fall of the truth, and to deny one's Lord, but the end thereof is death, and only the ways of duty and obedience and true wisdom are ways of enduring pleasantness and paths of abiding peace.

It is the end that crowns the work. The morsel that is sweet to the taste, but that brings bitterness and death, were better left untasted. The loaf that is plain and coarse may build up fiber and give health and strength. Obedience, yoke-bearing and burden-carrying for Christ may not seem the easiest at the time, but, unless we are guilty of incomparable folly, we shall have respect to the recompense of the reward. It is only when we are entirely lacking Christian grace and Christian sense that we are so near-sighted that we can not even think of looking toward the end of the way that stretches out before us.

It is easy to be a Christian. It is the only really easy life that was ever devised, and it has been devised by the infinite wisdom and love and grace, and pressed upon us. He who lives as a Christian will, in this present life, miss a little hilarity and boisterous mirth and intoxicating revelry

and selfish ease and self-indulgence. But he will miss many a heartache and many a pang and many a degradation. And he is on the way to the eternal peace and joy and glory. He will come, in due time, to the crown and the throne and the home of fadeless beauty. "Facilis est descensus Averni." It has long been admitted that it is easy to drop into perdition, but it is easier to walk in the upward way, even though at first strait and narrow, for at the last it leads over the Delectable Mountains to the gates of pearl, and widens out into the golden streets of the Celestial City.

A PROSPEROUS SOUL.

It is a little strange that people so generally emphasize the body above the soul. When we meet one another we inquire as to one another's health, and we generally assume that it is the body about which we ask. "How do you do?" "Oh, I am very well except for a cold and a headache." Has the soul a cold and a headache, or do I assume, and is it the truth, that my body, and not my soul, is inquired about? Usually our inquiries and answers are all about the body, and a solicitous word about the soul would awaken embarrassment and some sort of stammering and blushing reply.

He was a rather peculiar man who said: "No, sir; I do not have a soul." "What do you mean? I had no idea that you were a materialist." "I am not a materialist. Far from it. But I do not have a soul. I prefer to say that I have a body. I am a soul. For the present I inhabit this body, but I am to leave it after a time." He was peculiar, but he had the truth.

It is a pity that we are not, all of us, more peculiar in this same direction. If so, we should think more of the health and strength and well-being of the soul than we do, and would not estimate the body to be important out of all true proportion.

We are often led to wish, in regard to a great many people, that their souls might have some of the attention they give to their bodies, and that they might have spiritual life and vigor akin to the physical vitality and health they possess. We think it would be a great blessing if their souls could prosper as well as their bodies do. It seems, in the case of most people, that they think more and care more for body than for soul. Of one man we read, in the Third Epistle of John, a different story. John writes that he wishes the body of the beloved Gaius might prosper even as his soul prospered. He was, probably, an invalid or temporarily ill, but it is certain that, whatever the condition of his body, his soul was a prosperous and well-conditioned soul.

When one's body is well, there is a healthful appetite; good food is eaten with relish, digested and assimilated. So when a soul is in health, it has a longing for

spiritual food. It feeds on Christ, the living Bread of Life. It loves the written Word and feeds upon the truth as found in the Holy Scriptures. God's Word is found and eaten, and is found to be more than one's necessary food. Religious truth is relished. The teaching and preaching of God's Word is a delight. He who is in good condition spiritually, so as to have soul prosperity, loves to feed upon divine truth, and is built up and strengthened by means of it.

Again, when one's body is well, the lungs draw in the air with a healthful vigor, and are built up by it. Few of us breathe in enough of the vital air. So when a soul is well, it breathes in the very life and Spirit of God in prayer. No one can be a Christian who does not pray. He must pray, in order to live, as one must breathe in order to have physical life. The more we study into the matter, the more wonderfully striking seems the analogy between breathing and prayer. The student of language may discuss the etymological relation between the words for spirit and for air. If we are in the Spirit, we shall feel ourselves to be in a very atmosphere of prayer.

Again, when one's body is well, it is active, and delights in exercise and activity. It can have no health without it. There is flabbiness and weakness and disease without exercise. So when a soul is in health, it is ready to engage in God's service. It is obedient. It is ready to do God's will. It seeks ways in which it may work for God and his cause. A selfish, inactive, useless Christian is an absolute anomaly. The follower of Christ lives not to himself, but to him who died for him and rose again. The soul that prospers, and is well, is awake and active in the life and service of Jesus Christ.

Again, when one's body is well, there is sensitiveness as to pain. The paralyzed, stupefied, fever-burned body is in a dangerous condition and is almost unconscious of pain. So the soul that is well is sensitive in conscience as to sin. The lapse into sin causes it pain. This indicates health. While health is buoyant and happy and joyous and free from suffering, for the most part, anything that attacks the well-being of the body causes pain, so that pain is a salutary warning. So spiritual life is joy and peace and gladness, while there is sensitiveness as to

wrong-doing and pain of conscience when sin has been committed. Alas for the condition of those who have no interest in religious things, and who do not care for sin or for salvation.

It is a great thing to be well and buoyant in health. Some have this only in their bodies. Some have it in their souls, rather, as in the case of the beloved Gaius. It is a blessed thing if the soul gains the ascendancy, and, even while the outward man perishes, the inward man is renewed day by day. There is a life where there shall be no pain either of soul or body, and a home in which both body and soul shall know eternal buoyancy and gladness in the holy presence of God.

WINGS AND HANDS.

Holy aspiration is one part of religious life. The devotional spirit is an important element in the life of a true child of God. Piety may be likened to wings, by means of which one rises into the high realms of life. In prayer and communion with God one soars above the ordinary levels of earthly existence. It is an experience which is to be sought after, and which must be possessed by all who know anything of real spirituality. Life must not be lived on the low levels. We must be able to rise above material conditions. We are more than physical and intellectual. We must not be content to eat and to drink and to die. There are things that are more enduring and more to be desired than those that we see and hear and touch with our physical senses. The angels are represented as having wings, and by this we have impressed upon us the fact of their higher and more spiritual life in the presence and service of God.

In the wonderful vision recorded by
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Ezekiel we find the account of a glorious being which was mysterious and yet strangely gracious and impressive in its appearance. Its attributes were intelligence and spirituality and holiness and devotion to God, with courage and steadfastness in his service. It had the faces of an eagle, a cherub, a lion, and a man. It was wise and holy and strong and noble. It was full of activity and wisdom. It was gloriously enswathed in a cloud of brightness and mystery, and wonderfully supplied with wings. It represented the high and holy life of aspiration and devotion. But underneath the wings were seen the hands of a man.

Hands are for work, and they typify practical service. However devotional and aspiring the spiritual life may be, the child of God finds himself here on earth in conditions that call for hard and faithful work. He must work and watch as well as pray. There are times when he may close the door of his closet while he prays within, but there are other times when he must close it while he works without. It is impossible to remain long on the Mount of Transfiguration. There are suffering ones down on the plain, who are to be healed. Holy visions may be seen on the mountain

top, but there are impure devils to be cast out at the foot of the mountain. On wings of faith we rise to holy communion with Christ and his holy ones, but with the hands of consecrated service we take hold of our duty and do it in loving obedience.

Every true Christian has the wings of spirituality, but he has also the hands of service. Hands signify work, and we must be active and diligent in the Lord's cause if we shall make our lives tell for good. It takes work to make a church successful. We can not fold our hands and get our work done. We can not expect to be carried to the skies on flowery beds of ease. Lazy people make very poor Christians. An active man, such as Paul, is apt to be a useful Christian after he is converted. The people built the wall of Jerusalem in Nehemiah's day, for they had a mind to work, but where people are not so disposed they will never build up the church. Let the wings carry one up into God's presence, but let the hands do God's work here on earth.

And hands are for giving. To be sure this is a very important department of working. We are to work, and are to devote the first fruits of all our increase to

the Lord's cause. A giving church is a living, working church. A Christian who is ready and willing to give in such measure as to honor God is a very good type of a working Christian, and he will usually be found working in other lines as diligently and lovingly as he is in the important work of filling the Lord's treasury. The piety which will not give is spurious. The man who sings so vigorously that he does not notice the contribution box as it passes, has a religion that is vain.

And hands are for greeting. We touch right hands to show that we are friends and not enemies. When we extend the open right hand, it is to show that we have no deadly weapon in it. This is the spirit in which Christian people must strive to win the world for Christ. We are to invite them and persuade them to come to him. We are to greet them in the spirit of love, and with the open hand grasp them and bring them into the church of Christ. After all our praying we are to go out into the world with open hands, and try to bring people to the feast that Christ has prepared.

Christian life has its two sides. Each is important. Each is essential. We must pray and we must work. We must use

hands and we must use wings. Our Lord did not spend all his time on the mountain tops in prayer, but went about doing good. So the child of God must use, in practical service, the strength which comes in the hours of devotion. He will pray most and best who has most work to do for God and his fellowmen, and he who longs to be spiritually useful will seek in prayer to be spiritually strong.

WATCHMEN ON THE TOWERS.

A very impressive illustration is used by the prophet Ezekiel to emphasize the fact that those who are in places of responsibility will be held to an account for their faithfulness, or the lack of it. In the hands of the prophet this illustration, or parable, is very startling, as a direct message from God to his people to arouse them to carefulness in doing their whole duty.

We see a watchman on the tower of a city. He scans the horizon in all directions for possible danger. He has a trumpet in his hand. Enemies are liable to come stealing into the neighborhood of the city to surprise those who are out in the fields, or outside the walls of the city for any purpose. The lives of these people are really in the hands of the watchman. If an enemy approaches, the watchman must see him, and must give notice to those who are exposed, so that they may flee into the city, within the protection of its walls. The watchman must bear the blame if any are surprised and slain. If any are warned,

however, and do not flee after being warned, they must bear the blame of their own death.

This has a spiritual application to all times, and to all lands. Sin abounds in the world. No one is safe from its approaches and surprises. There are a great many, especially the young, who are very inexperienced and in very great danger. They need the help and counsel and warning of those who can come to them in the name and love of the Lord, and plead with them to flee from danger, repent of sin, believe in Jesus Christ, love and follow him through life, and know the real and full meaning of salvation. There is safety just at hand for them, if they will flee for refuge to Christ. There is death for them if they stay away from his love and grace.

The minister is such a watchman. He is in a place of great responsibility. It is his duty to warn men and women of their danger, to point out to them the certainty of death, so long as they remain in sin, and to set before them the way of life, so that they will come to Christ and be saved. It is a terrible thing for one to be in the ministry and be unfaithful to his trust. **There** should be the plain preaching of the

solemn warnings of the Gospel. The full round of truth must be preached. There must be no unfaithful silences. There must be the setting forth of all the great truths of the Cross. There must be personal dealing with souls. There must be no fear of man. There must be tactful and loving words, too, so that the truth may be effective if possible. It is a terrible thing for one to be a minister and to let souls perish for lack of faithfulness. How many ministers will have blood on their garments? No one may know. Each one should work and pray that he may be faithful.

But elders and other church officers, Sabbath-school superintendents and teachers, are likewise watchmen who must be on their guard lest they let souls perish. Each of these persons has great responsibility. There is great danger to the one who fills one of them carelessly and unworthily. But there is equal guilt to the one who will not take such a place because he wishes to evade responsibility. There are those around us who must be saved, or they will perish. Some must be on the watch towers. Refusal to go there is negligence and cowardice that God will

rebuke. The elder and the Sabbath-school teacher have great opportunities. Those who are efficient and faithful have a great reward, here and hereafter.

But each parent is a watchman, and is set especially to watch for his or her own children. No parent should delegate this duty to minister or Sabbath-school teacher. What can any parent be about who does not use every possible effort to win for Christ the souls given to him or her by the Lord? There is nothing on earth worth thinking of by the side of the salvation of the souls of the children. Some persons give themselves to business, neglect God and his service, and let their children go to ruin unwarned and unentreated by themselves. There is blood on the hands of many parents to-day, we are sorely afraid.

But every church member is a watchman who ought to be warning others and bringing them to Christ. To know enough to be a member of the church is to know enough to save others, and he who will not do what he can do, in this sinful world, is in a position in which he is incurring the sore displeasure of the Almighty.

But there is a measureless responsibility with those who are not even members of

the church. They ought to serve God, even if they do not. No one absolves himself from responsibility by refusing to accept it. Some people who are living in this world without any seeming care or thought as to themselves or others, will, some day, come to a great surprise when they awaken to the realization that they have thrown away themselves and others whom they ought to have guided into life. Every one who lives is in a place of responsibility, and God will hold him to a strict account.

THE LORD'S MONEY.

It takes money to carry on the work of the Church, but there is nothing in the world so worthy of being carried on. As this is the supreme cause in the world, being the cause of Christ, the support of it is necessarily the supreme use of money. All other causes, important and necessary though they be, are of secondary importance. Many other causes must not be neglected, but this must be supported. It is the cause of God. It must never be overlooked.

When God projected the cause of his church he knew that it would take money to carry it on as it would for the home and for the civil government among men. Homes are provided for by making parents responsible; governments are provided for by taxing the citizens, and the Church is to be supported by the people paying into its treasury a sufficient amount to maintain its life and work. God gave specific directions as to this, and we do well to take heed to and to follow his instructions.

It is no more giving when we contribute

our just proportion to the support of the Church than it is giving when we pay our taxes or when we pay the proper expenses of our homes and families. It is our rightful due, and we should neither excuse ourselves from its performance nor take undue credit to ourselves for its performance. There should be no hesitancy in paying into the Lord's treasury all that he asks for and all that is needed. The Church should be sustained by the simple and prompt payment of all those who receive its benefits. We are to learn to pay rather than to resort to questionable methods of raising money.

We should be very careful how we call the soliciting of money for the Lord's use by the belittling term of "begging" and yet we sometimes hear this done. It is our duty to do what the Lord directs us in this as in all other matters, and no call to duty is to be either evaded or stigmatized. It is an honor to be permitted to help carry on the spiritual work of the Church here on earth. God might work miracles and sustain the Church without money, just as he might send angels to preach and to do the other work of the Church instead of

men. But he does neither one. He expects his people to pay and to work. The money that is needed is in the hands of God's people, just as they are endowed with strength and talents of speech. It is God's money. We are only stewards of all our talents and possessions. We are to use, at the Lord's call, all we are and all we have.

The New Testament rule as laid down very plainly is that we are to give as God has prospered us. This is the plain apostolic direction. But in what proportion? One may make it his rule to give the one-tenth of his income, another the one-hundredth, and another the one-thousandth, and, as the Lord prospers them, they will have more or less to give. It is clear that there must be something else as a rule to define the duty, for, by itself, there is here no rule for educating covetousness out of the heart. God is exact as to the amount of time that is to be devoted to the sacred purposes, and it hurts some people very greatly to use one-seventh of all the days for spiritual uses. God does not tell us to set apart as much time as we think we can spare. The same principle is apparent in the use of money. God asks the tithe, and, according

as he prospers us, this will amount to more or less.

When the Jewish nation was in the height of its prosperity, and in the full tide of its spiritual tide, we find them paying the tithe into the Lord's treasury, and when they were declining we find them neglecting this duty and being upbraided for it. The Roman Catholics expect this much from their people. The Mormons demand this all the time. If these bodies thrive temporally as they do under this provision, how much more is the Church of the pure evangel worthy of this, and how much more ready should we be to pay it for the sake of Christ!

The law of the tithe is like the law of the Sabbath in that it has never been abrogated, and that it is held very loosely by many, and utterly scouted by many more. Yet those who profess to be guided by God's Word should be very careful how they treat lightly any of God's directions. Before the Jewish nation was in existence, the announcement was made that the tithe is the Lord's. The Jewish nation, living under the directly divine government, incorporated this principle into their

rational law and life, and paid the tithe into the Lord's treasury. If Christian people should all do this, there would be no limit to the success that might attend their efforts to send the Gospel through all the earth.

MISSIONS.

There are a great many arguments against the work of foreign missions which are sufficiently satisfactory to the unspiritually minded to justify them in their course of doing nothing to give the Gospel to the heathen world. Of course, their spiritual inertia or lack of interest would be sufficient to keep them from doing anything, but, in order to show that their opposition is founded on reason, there is a great array of argument against the very thing which the Lord Jesus Christ commissioned his disciples to undertake and perform.

It is sometimes said that foreign missions do not succeed; that the work is simply emotional and visionary, and that nothing real and lasting is accomplished. In answer to this we may simply point to England and America and to other Christian lands, in every one of which heathenism would be prevalent and undisturbed had not the religion of Christ been carried to these countries and people in early days by those who went out, in obedience to the

Lord, to carry the Gospel to every creature. If it had not been for foreign missions our ancestors would have continued in their heathen life, and we, their children, would still be walking in their unhappy footsteps. England and America are proofs that foreign missions succeed.

But it is sometimes said again that the success is only partial, and not such as to justify us in going to the great trouble and expense of sending missionaries to lands that are intrenched in their old heathen faiths. These people say that, with all our church life and influence and machinery, there are millions in this country that hold out against the Gospel, and that it is not to be expected that the Gospel will succeed in lands where there are only a few missionaries. This argument proves entirely too much. If there are people in this land who held out against Christ, in despite of all they see and know, they are so hard-hearted that there is little reason for wasting time with them. The fact is that heathen people, in proportion to their advantages, are turning to Christ more rapidly than people in Christian lands. Our foreign missionaries receive far more persons into the church on profession of faith in Christ than

do our ministers at home. This is a fact. There is no doubt about it. All church reports show it. Missions do succeed, and they are succeeding more and more.

We have in our own country at present at least 29,000,000 members of the various churches. The census of 1900, more than five years ago, gave nearly 28,000,000. Of these, about 20,000,000 are communicants in our Protestant churches, with a much larger Protestant population not embraced in the number, and about 9,000,000 are the Roman Catholic population. There are at least 60,000,000 of people who are Protestant in their belief and adherence. They give assent to the Gospel. Their lives are more or less influenced by it. They are governed by its practical principles and live in accordance with its general moral precepts. In our nation we may safely say that we have a community of at least seventy millions whose lives are molded very largely by the power of the Gospel, and we would not be willing to say about the few remaining millions that they disbelieve and hate God. Practically this is a Christian land, although there is much sin and disloyalty to God and rejection of the saving influences of Christ and his Holy Spirit.

The Gospel has done so much for us in making life and property safe and secure, that we should be greatly anxious to pass along its benefits and privileges to others who are less favored. If there is any way of bringing other lands to enjoy as much as we do, we should be sufficiently unselfish to do what we can for them. There is such a way, and that way is foreign missions.

But again, it is said that the most effective way to induce heathen people to accept our religion would be to show them what it can do for us at home, and that, consequently, we should keep all our forces at work here until our people are entirely converted, every evil thing eliminated, and we an absolutely perfect people, showing up as a perfect example, and stirring up all the world to accept our religion and become like us. But this is not the divine plan. We have in Christ the perfect example to point the world to. If we remain at home and keep all our religion at home, we shall simply exhibit ourselves as a colossal expression of selfishness. If we let the heathen people perish without the Gospel, while we parade ourselves before their eyes, they will not lovingly cry out for our faith and our Savior, but they will hate us for our

selfishness and will accuse us to God for our betrayal of our sacred trust. Only as we give them the story of the cross are we setting them an example that shall win them to a saved life.

Christ's plan is the best plan. Being the best plan, we are to know no other. The Gospel is the secret of America's greatness. If every soul in America would accept Christ, our country would be far greater. If we withhold the Gospel from the world, we shall shrink and shrivel in pettiness and selfishness and disloyalty to Christ. It is not simply a question as to what is to become of the heathen world if we withhold the Gospel, but what is to become of ourselves if we are so unkind and unfeeling as to have no regard to the need of those who are perishing. If we have the Spirit of Christ, we will do what lies in our power to spread the joyful tidings over all the world. We will not wait for arguments and figures to convince and move us. We will move at the impulse of Christ's love. We will try to seek the lost everywhere in remembrance of him and of his directions. We will have in mind the fact that, inasmuch as we do this to even the least, we do it unto him.

TEMPERANCE.

In all ages and in all lands intemperance has been the besetting sin of great multitudes. In yielding to it they have brought upon themselves calamities of body and of soul, while sorrow, destitution and crime have been the accompaniments and the results of their sinful self-indulgence. The wise, the good, the philanthropic, everywhere have raised their voices in warning, in pleading, in protestation. Something has been done to check the tide of misery. Many of the fallen have been uplifted, and many have been kept from falling.

God's providential dealings with men have done much to point out the dangers and evils of a course of intemperance. His laws in the natural world have been enforced, and men have seen that they could not go on in sin without receiving the penalty for it in their bodies. The bleared eye, the palsied nerve, the blotched face, the bloated frame, the feverish stomach and the maddened brain have always been the external marks of the drunkard, and while

these have been physical signs testifying against him the ravages have been going on in his moral and religious nature, and at the same time his business, his home and his loved ones have suffered.

Efforts to repress intemperance have been made everywhere and always. Throughout the whole Word of God are the solemn admonitions against the evil and destructive habits of using strong drink. The book of Proverbs, the prophecy of Isaiah, and, in fact, nearly every book of the Bible contains most earnest admonition and instruction on this subject.

Some people say that intemperance is so deadly to-day because of the fact that impure and poisonous liquor is used. Let it be understood that there is no pure liquor and that there never has been. Alcohol is the deadly poison that has always been sought for to make men drunk. All the other poisons used along with it are comparatively harmless as compared with this. The losses and degradations over which the prophets and apostles wept and mourned were brought about by "pure" wine, and the apostle was led to write that, even under the influence of the pure wines of New Testament times and lands, the one

who became a drunkard should not inherit the kingdom of heaven, while, so far as moral character was concerned, he classed him with extortioners and thieves. It is not a little danger, a little vice, or a little crime to form the habits and live the life of the drunkard.

Laws have been made in almost endless variety for the limitation and extermination of this evil. The study of temperance legislation is most interesting from one standpoint, while it is alternately encouraging and disheartening. Laws have never entirely abated the evil, while ceaseless vigilance has been necessary for their enforcement and continuance. Education has been continually necessary. Religious motives must be constantly pressed. Temperance societies and leagues and orders have done much. Business men are forceful in demanding temperance and total abstinence in their employees. On the whole, advance is being made. The world stands on a higher temperance plane than it did a century ago.

It would seem that there are no persons to raise their voices in favor of strong drink except the manufacturers and dealers, who have sold themselves for money

to work iniquity, on the one hand, and on the other the men who are slaves to their stomachs. All men who have regard for the well-being of their fellows, from a religious, moral, patriotic, social, philanthropic or economic standpoint, denounce the use of intoxicants as antagonistic to religion, good morals, physical health, family life, personal success and national prosperity. One has but to open his eyes to see the damaging results of liquor drinking, and we have hope, founded on the intelligence and conscience of the people, that the liquor traffic is to perish.

The financial cost of liquor is astounding as measured by the money spent for it, the lives rendered useless and destroyed by it that might be productive, the poverty, disease, insanity and crime that are its direct products. Common sense would urge the destruction of the cause of so large a cost as comes to us by means of prisons, infirmaries and asylums.

The whole matter of using alcohol as a drink or a medicine is a fallacy. Intemperate men can not endure cold or heat or disease. Thousands of volumes are condensed in this one statement of fact. The physician who prescribes it is behind the

times, and the enemy of his patients. The mother who permits it in her home, as a drink for entertainment, or as an element in her food for seasoning, is foolish and criminal beyond the power of words to describe.

Let Christian people be forceful in their influence against intemperance in any and every form. Alcoholic wine is scarcely ever brought to the communion table anywhere. Liquor is banished from our soldiers' canteens and should never, at the demand of dealers or drunkards, be restored. Let us drive it from all our homes. Let us expel it from our towns and counties and States. Let us be strong in our opposition to it everywhere, vigilant, determined and prayerful, and we can do something to check the power and limit the influence of this mighty evil.

SABBATH-SCHOOL WORK.

The importance of the work contemplated by the Sabbath-school can not be over-estimated. It is the religious education of the children of the country, many of these gathered in being from the families of the Church, but many of them coming from homes where no religious influences touch them. It is then to be counted on as one of the evangelizing agencies, and a foremost purpose with its workers should be to secure the early conversion of the children who are under their influence, it may be, for only a little while.

Whatever the form of the effort, the underlying thought and purpose is, the same everywhere, and that is, to reach and teach the children so that they shall come to know the truth of the gospel, and shall be led to accept savingly of Jesus Christ. In all dispensations of the Church, in Old Testament as well as New Testament times and since, there has always been some provision for instructing the children, teaching them the reality and importance of sa-

cred things, and training them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

The fact that, owing to the heterogeneous nature of our population, there can be no religious training in our public schools as in some older lands, makes it all the more imperative that the Church shall put forth strenuous and unremitting efforts to teach the children the fear of the Lord. If the Bible can not be read in the public schools, it ought to be read all the more diligently at home and in the church in all its work. Let the Christian people realize that the home and the church are responsible for the spiritual training and salvation of the children.

Much good is being done in the Sabbath-school. Immeasurably more might be done if the competency and spirituality of the whole Sabbath-school force were ideal. They are not. One hour a week, with an imperfect force of teachers, is not much, yet it is far better than nothing, and in many cases it has meant a revolutionized community, and many souls regenerated and trained for Christ. Let us not overrate the Sabbath-school. Especially let us not underrate it. Let us soberly, conscientiously and earnestly, do what we can to make it what it ought to be, and what it may be-

come, under the blessing of God on the efforts of his loving-hearted people.

The Sabbath-school is to be regarded not as an independent institution, but simply as one department of the Church. In it we see the Church exerting its activity in securing the important ends to which reference has just been made. It may be that the Church is at work for the religious training of the children of its own families, providing for them a service adapted to their necessities, and calculated to be of great spiritual interest and advantage to them. It may be that the larger purpose is manifest in reaching the children of the entire vicinity and bringing them under the power of the gospel. It may be that the individual Church organizes and develops its own particular mission for the benefit of some neighborhood that needs this sort of spiritual care. It may be that the denomination has its missionary board for organizing Sabbath-schools on the frontiers that shall grow into churches after a time.

Christian people should not be content to leave the religious training of their children to the Sabbath-school teacher, however competent and devoted, but should make the home the real training-school in

piety. Nor should the Sabbath-school be the only church service for the children. They should be taken to the preaching-services and trained to attend on the preaching of the Word. After-results will vindicate the wisdom of this course.

One person may have a good Sabbath-school. Of course it can not be as good as ten persons equally excellent can make, but it may be the means of great results. The superintendent may not have ideal teachers, but if he be a wise and good man he may animate the whole school, arouse within it a deep interest in and knowledge of spiritual things, and may lead both scholars and teachers into a better and a personal acquaintance with Jesus Christ.

YOUNG PEOPLE.

The young people of the Church call for and require particular attention in order that their religious life may be properly nurtured and that they may be developed in their powers of Christian activity and usefulness. The period lying between childhood and maturity demands special attention. During recent years much interest has been felt in the organization and work of young people's societies, and much has been done along these lines, a great deal of which has been worthy of the highest commendation.

It is not so much a matter of the success of any particular society or organization. The primary object is the welfare of the young people themselves and the Church. That society is good which sets the young people to work in the study of the Scriptures, in the holding of devotional meetings, in the activities of the home Church, in the study and giving to missions and other causes of the Church, and in efforts to secure the evangelization of the community in which they live. The

young people are no longer children. They will soon be the adults, and they should learn to take up the devotional, financial and social work of the Church in a spiritual, practical and effective manner.

The young people are soon to be older. They may stave off some of the significance of the inevitable by retaining young hearts, but they must grow into maturity, and into old age, if they live. Out of their ranks are to come the officers and leaders of the Church, the Sabbath-school teachers and workers. The wise pastor will have this fact in view, and will seek to train them in Bible knowledge, in church work, in Christian giving, in missionary interest and in philanthropic activity. The wise and good pastor is busying himself in these directions. His young people are in his heart and in his prayers. He leads them and loves them. Happy is the pastor who has his quiver full of them.

He is a strange pastor, or strangely situated, who does not find his young people ready to be led. Ordinarily the young people who are Christians are not only enthusiastic workers and students, but they are pliable and docile in the hands of a true and good pastor. Mr. Spurgeon used

to say that he had far less trouble with the persons who united with the church before they were sixteen years of age than he did with those who united later in life. This is the general experience of pastors. Where it is not, there is something wrong. Either some abnormal influence is at work among the young people of that particular congregation, or else there is something wrong in the spirit or manner of the pastor. In either case the evil should be discovered and remedied.

Pastor and young people should be in most sympathetic touch. The good pastor will try to do something for each young person in his congregation in giving him something to do, or he will take general notice of the work of the young people, commending it, taking part in it and developing it, and he will seek to be with the young people as far as is possible, in their meetings and in the events of their social life. But he will be discouraged if they do not meet him half way at least. If we had sufficient influence we would constrain all the young people to attend the preaching services. It is depressing and disheartening to the pastor to see them assembled in their meeting, in which they have per-

haps had the help of his presence and assistance, and then deliberately walk away from the evening service as though they had no interest in the welfare of the church and no regard for the feelings of the pastor. Where this is done it should come to an end, or the best results are an utter impossibility.

Because some particular pastor is not enthusiastic over some special organization which seeks to control his young people is no argument that he does not care for his young people. It may be an evidence that he is particularly careful of them and their interests. Whether his judgment on all points may be sound or not is another matter. He wishes his young people to be growing and working, intelligent in faith and loyal in life. It may be that his principal objection to the organization is the danger that it may divide their interest, dissipate their energies, and distract their attention from local and actual interests to those that are of secondary importance. There has been a great deal of attention given, of late years, to conventions, many of which have been of no particular advantage.

The young men and young women of

the Church of to-day have had much given to them, and from them much, rightfully, will be required. They should bear themselves with intelligence, piety and gravity in the life and work of the kingdom of Christ. They do not need to be petted and indulged, and they should not look for nor expect such treatment. They should put away childish things and bestir themselves as those whom God is calling to sober and serious service, which they are to render in the spirit of exalted and joyous self-surrender.

MEN'S LEAGUES.

It is fitting and proper that the men of a particular church should be banded together for the sake of more intimate fellowship and more practical efficiency. All the other elements of the congregation are, or may be, thus organized. The women have their missionary and aid societies and prayer-meetings. The children have their mission bands and junior young people's societies. The young people have their Endeavor or similar organizations. In many congregations there is a Boys' Brigade or a band of some name for the young men and boys.

In recent years men's leagues have been started in many congregations, and oftentimes with happy results. Of course, in order to be worth while, the end in view in such an organization must be of sufficient dignity and importance to compensate for the time and effort required. It does take much effort for the men to carry on such a work. Busy and engrossed as they are, they are asked to attend one more meeting, and there devise some form of effort

to add to the attractiveness and efficiency of the Church. But let the appeal be made to the Christian manhood of the Church, and it will be sure to meet with a response.

There is only one sufficiently important end to be aimed at, and that is the conversion of souls and the spiritual uplift of the people. Let this motive be lovingly presented, and there will be men to acknowledge its power and enroll themselves to work unitedly to secure the spiritual welfare of those whom they may lead to Christ and to a place in his Church.

Sometimes the special work undertaken is that of developing the Sabbath-evening service and helping to make it a more thoroughly evangelistic service. When the men rally to the assistance of the pastor it is as when Aaron and Hur upheld the hands of Moses. They advertise the meeting as the one for which they are especially responsible. They have a program, or order of services, printed, it may be, and distributed during the week and through the congregation. They invite people. They act as ushers, with hearty friendliness. They help to add new features to the service of praise. In the after-meeting they distribute cards of invitation to Christ, get the

names of those who manifest interest, speak to them of Christ or introduce them to the pastor, and in many ways seek the spiritual welfare of the people of the community.

They may have their own ways of going about these matters. The essential thing is to have an interest aroused for the work, and then to do it. It is not necessary to have the particular name or constitution that some other league may have. The brotherhoods of Andrew and Philip have been very efficient in many churches, but the matter of greatest importance is for men to have the spirit of these two early disciples who led their own brothers to Jesus Christ, and they will find just the right and best way to do it.

There may be monthly meetings for consultation, business, discussion, social greeting and prayer. An occasional supper together, at which the work of the league, of the church, and of the great kingdom of Christ may be talked over, will prove to be of great attractiveness and helpfulness. The great animating purpose of each league must be that of leading souls to Christ and upbuilding the Church.

WOMAN AND HER WORK.

Woman's religious work has always been a very important element in the life and progress of Christianity. This is not surprising. We would naturally expect one-half of the adult membership of the church at any time to be composed of women, and at least one-half of the attendance on religious services, and of the interest and prayer and work of the church, to come from them. That they have more than fulfilled what might have been expected from them shows that they have more generally than men realized the goodness of God in the Gospel and accepted the grace and service of the Redeemer.

When the Gospel was first preached it won some of its earliest adherents among women. Many of the early followers of Christ were women. The Marys and Marthas sat at his feet and ministered to his needs. We find in the Gospels many notices of women who were interested in following Christ. Some of these were the last at the cross and the earliest at the sepulchre. Among the disciples which

Christ left on earth at his ascension were many women. Among those who turned to him at the preaching of the apostles in heathen lands, we find such names as Dorcas and Damaris, Lois and Eunice, Phebe and Priscilla, Junia and Julia. Many of these were active in the work of the Lord, and the Apostle Paul was urgent that they should be helped in their holy labors.

That the Gospel should be accepted by so many women who honored Christ by serving him lovingly, was a credit to the women and a testimony to the power and purity of the Gospel. It was such a system as commended itself to their best ideas and instincts. It is to-day just such a law and rule of life as commends itself, in its purity and kindness and sweetness and nobility, to all that is best in the hearts of women everywhere. It promises well to themselves and to their families and home life, and to the future of their sons and their daughters.

Wherever the Gospel has been accepted it has proved a blessing to women. It has found them slaves and degraded in nearly every land under the sun. It has changed their condition from that of the slaves or toys of men into that of honored

and beloved equals. It has changed the ideas that exist in regard to women in heathen land, as that they have no souls, into the exalted conceptions that characterize the holy religion of Jesus Christ. Women in all Christian lands are great debtors to the Christian religion, and they should show their appreciation of what it has done for them by being faithful followers of Christ.

Woman's work is to be done, in a very large and important sense, in the home. Nothing can take the place of the loving and prayerful influence of the Christian woman in that realm where she reigns as queen. There is no department in life where she is so greatly needed. The world is an immeasurable loser when the home-life is interfered with by women being taken from home by duties or attractions in any other realm of life. The natural and divine law is that man shall make the living and that woman shall make the home. The breach of this law works disaster. The Christian wife, mother, sister and daughter exerts an influence for Christ in her home, if she will, that the Church and the world need, and without which society is in most deadly and imminent peril.

Woman's work in the church is done in attendance on church services; in the instruction of the Sabbath-school; in the prayer services and other devotional services of the church; in the social organizations and ministrations whereby the life and influence of the church are advanced; and in the immeasurably useful and aggressive operations of the temperance and missionary societies, by means of which Christian women of to-day are accomplishing so much good in the name of Christ. They are to be appreciated and commended for the forceful, patient and determined spirit in which they are prosecuting their work in these great departments of needed Christian effort.

In comparatively recent years the women have organized their missionary societies with the special thought of giving the Gospel to the women of heathen lands. Of course, the whole missionary movement has been comparatively modern. But one great difficulty that has met our missionaries in many eastern lands has been the inaccessibility of the women. In many of the castes of India, for instance, it has been found impossible for male missionaries to meet the women. There has grown up the department of Christian effort in

modern times in which women missionaries have met the native women, in their homes, and in which native Bible-reading women have been trained to go to other women with the glad message of the Gospel. For all that has been done in this direction we may be profoundly grateful. The Gospel is winning its way in heathen lands, to no inconsiderable degree, by means of the consecrated efforts of Christian women, who are telling their sisters of the glad message of life and love.

It is well for the women of Christian lands, young and old, to take an increasing interest in the welfare of the women in heathen lands. Here is a branch of Christian work to which they may give themselves without hesitation. They may raise money to send the Gospel to those who are perishing. Many of them may go as teachers and physicians to those who need their living touch in the name of Christ. Many of them who go as the wives of preaching missionaries will find abundant opportunities of reaching and helping to save the wives and mothers, the sisters and daughters in those dark lands to which they carry the light of the saving love and truth of Christ.

WHAT KIND OF A CHURCH ?

We have seen a couplet which all church members are exhorted to repeat and sing, to dream over and think over and pray over. They are in the form of a question. We do not know who wrote them, but it would be a good thing if every man and woman and child in the whole country would answer them. They are:

What kind of a church would our church be
If every member were just like me?

They are easily learned. They are easily remembered. A study of them by each member of each church would be equal in effect to a whole week's evangelistic service in every church of the land. Suppose we all repeat them together, once more:

What kind of a church would our church be
If every member were just like me?

How about church attendance? A regular, church-attending congregation has a commanding influence in the community, grows in numbers and power, profits from the preaching of the Word, honors God and is honored by him. On the other hand,

in a church where there is irregular and straggling attendance, there is little progress made in building up the church, or in having an influence for good in the community; the minister becomes discouraged because his work is not appreciated, and his efforts largely go for nothing; the individual members gain but little, and religion is at a standstill. How about it? Let each individual ask himself whether he is a model in respect to his duty at the church services, the Sabbath-school and the prayer-meeting. If he is faithful, then he is doing what he can to honor God and increase the attendance at the sanctuary. If he is irregular, and all should follow his example, there would be little manifestation of life in the house of God.

How about the financial work? In every church there is anxious thought and contriving on the part of the officers as to the financial outcome each year. There are some members who are thoughtful and faithful in their financial obligations, but there are some who seem to have no sense of responsibility. Each member of the church knows, or should know, just about what is needed to pay the annual expenses of the congregation. Whatever any one

fails to do, of his own rightful share, must be made up by some one else, or the church must suffer loss and shame. Let each member determine that his church shall never suffer from his own neglect, but that he will do his own full and honest duty financially.

How about the maintenance of family religion? A church has as much spirituality as its homes. If parents are faithful to instruct their children, to train them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, to keep up family worship, to pray for and with the children, and to take them to God's house and to set before them a godly example, there will be no difficulty about those children following them and becoming faithful followers of Jesus Christ. But if these things are neglected, the children will be scattered as the children of Eli, and the house of the ark of God will be neglected and deserted.

How about a consistent Christian life before the world? There are always, in every church, those who may be depended upon to maintain the cause of Christ. They are faithful in every duty, and they live consistently and faithfully before the world as Christians should. Others bring shame

upon the cause of Christ by lives that are not in accordance with their profession, or the ordinary laws of rectitude. They are a grief to their fellow Christians. Instead of being avenues of approach for Christ into the hearts of those around them, they are barriers to keep him away from them, and to keep them unsaved. Let each one ask himself, in the sight of God, what position he is taking before the world.

The Church is divinely instituted for the purpose of reaching the world. It is to be sustained by our personal labors, our attendance, our money, our prayers and the zealous and studied efforts of our lives to do God's will. Some in every church seem to do their whole duty. Some seem to have little sense of responsibility. It would be well if each one would think over and act upon the question:

What kind of a church would our church be
If every member were just like me?

CALLS TO THE MINISTRY.

The young men who will enter the theological seminaries during the next few years to make special preparation for the work of the ministry are now, for the most part, in the colleges, academies and high schools of the land. A few exceptional cases may be developed outside this group of young men, but it is evident that our main supply must come from those who are now students in various grades of preparation in these institutions just mentioned.

We would like to gain the attention of these young men, and speak to them a few warm-hearted words as to the attractions of the Gospel ministry. We would like to open up the way for God's call to this important and delightful work to reach the heart of some who might not otherwise hear or heed that call. For God is calling the choicest and best, the manliest and noblest, the strongest and the most excellent to take up this supereminent work. Those who understand and obey that call will thereby find usefulness, hap-

piness and success as we do not believe they can find it elsewhere.

We do not underrate any business in which good men serve God and do their duty, but we do place the ministry for usefulness and satisfaction at the very head of all the positions in which men may pass their days. Ahead of all material, commercial, political, intellectual or social interests is the spiritual work of advancing the kingdom of God, and he who is actually and personally engaged in this work directly is doing the very highest and most important thing in which he can possibly be engaged.

It is the duty of every individual to be a Christian, devoting himself to God's service, and, as a steward, realizing that all his time, property, faculties and social influence are to be held and used only as Christ would have them used and because they all belong to Christ. If we settle this matter of a thoroughly consecrated Christian life, we will be prepared to settle all the particulars of it as God gives us light on them. It is because so many undertake to make their choices in life independently of God's guidance that they fail so deplorably.

Every Christian young man should, first of all, be very clear in his own mind that he is not called into the ministry before he makes choice of some other life-work. The needs of the church for good ministers are so many and so great that no Christian young man should be indifferent to them. If God does not want him in this work, of course that settles it, but one should be very careful to know that God does not want him before he turns his back on the work of the ministry.

Of course if there are insuperable obstacles in the way, God does not demand that one accomplish impossibilities. If one has no health, no money, no friends, no strength of mind, no power of speech, or if he has impediments of mind or body that would bar his way, he is of course not called to this work in which large qualifications are demanded in order to any real success.

Sometimes, however, one is deterred when he should not be by mere fancied lacks. Moses held back and said he could not speak, but God knew best, and forced him to his work. It proved that Moses never had any real difficulty when the time came. Many a young man thinks that he

can not prepare great sermons, and hangs back from the work of the ministry, but if he gives himself to Christ and his service he will be able to preach by the time he gets through with his long course of preparation. The boy can not cure a fever or a broken limb, but by the time he becomes a physician he will have learned. The boy can not conduct a case in court, but he can by the time he is through with the law school and has become an attorney. It is not well to cross a bridge until it is reached. If God calls one to preach, he will be able, when the time comes, to prepare the sermon. Never let him fear.

Nor is the financial question one to cause dread. It costs something, of course, to take the educational course for the ministry, but how much it shall cost depends largely on the one taking it, and it is possible to almost any one who has real manhood. Instead of thinking it impossible, let a young man consult his pastor or some other intelligent and capable friend and he will be surprised to find how difficulties may be made to vanish.

Hundreds of young men are hesitating in regard to their future work in life. We would ask them to consider, very ser-

iously, whether they are not called into the ministry. There is no work like this in all the world, for the opportunities afforded for doing good and for the abounding satisfaction coming to those who do it. If we had the ordering of it, we would select hundreds of Christian young men who are going into various forms of business life, and would start them to make special preparation for the ministry right away. But we have no such ordering, and we might make many mistakes. But the Lord has the right to order our lives, and we fear greatly that many young men who are being called by him into the ministry are disregarding his call and disobeying the heavenly vision, and that they will reap regret in coming days for not listening and being willing to be led.

The ministry is not a great business, if by this is meant an opportunity for amassing great worldly wealth. But this is a petty consideration. A minister, who was also a great educator, completing fifty years in this work, said he was thankful that he had been permitted to live without having been agitated by the pursuit of material wealth. A good and faithful minister will always be provided for. He will

have influence for good, he will be the means of affecting the spiritual, moral and intellectual life of the community, he will have social position, he will have the reverence, love and gratitude of the people. These things are above price, and they can not be purchased by money. The ministry is better than a great business. It is a great calling, and he is thrice blessed to whom God comes in his providence and grace, opening up the way before him for entrance into this noble and distinguished service, in which one may glorify God in seeking the spiritual welfare of his fellow-men.

The ministry needs strong, good, wise, many men. There is room for them. It is possible for such men to find their way into the work. Those who are really worthy and capable men will find satisfaction in the work, and delightful compensations such as they never had previously imagined.

CONCLUSION.

“Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter; Fear God, and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man.”—Ecclesiastes xii. 13.

* * *

“And Jesus answered him: The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord; And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength.”—Mark xii. 29, 30.

PERSONAL RELIGION.

The Christian is one who has a personal relationship with Christ. He loves, trusts and follows Christ. By virtue of this personal relationship, he is and has a right to be known as a Christian. The name is definite, not miscellaneous; and it is based upon a definite covenant-right, and a definite relationship with Jesus Christ.

Religion is a personal matter. It is not a mere system of ethics. It does not merely concern itself with good conduct. There must be vastly more than good morals in a truly Christian life. There must be a disposition to take God into the account in everything that enters into the life. All must be done in respect to him and his wish. Mere morality or correctness of life does not satisfy. A gentleman said, at one time, that he did not conceive it his duty to try to serve God personally, nor did he believe that God so required, but that if he did as he ought in his own life, and in reference to his fellow-men, nothing more could be asked or required of him.

This gentleman had a very pleasant home and a family of very nice children. He was asked what he would think if his children should leave him entirely out of their plans and hearts, and should conceive that their only duty at home was to treat one another with affectionate regard and to live and act correctly, but with no recognition of, affection or care for the father. He saw that such an attitude on the part of the children would be most unnatural, and that no home is properly constituted in which the parents are disregarded and filial feelings uncultivated by the children. Even so is it with us in reference to God. We must not think that morality will satisfy God, while in our hearts there is no regard for him.

Religion is a personal matter. It is not a mere matter of ceremonial worship. It will not answer for one to attend church, and be interested in its services, and help financially to sustain it, and cultivate feelings of admiration for the appropriate music, architecture and social life of the church. All of this may be very refining and elevating, but something more is necessary. The soul must appreciate God as the personal, unseen object of faith and adora-

tion, and toward him the spiritual worship of the heart must arise. It is possible for one to be a mere formalist, as it is possible for him to be a mere moralist. He may enjoy, esthetically, the worship, and at the same time may not worship God. But if he does not take hold of God in holy adoration, he is among the unblessed ones who draw nigh in bodily presence and with their lips, while their hearts are far from him and their lives unsaved by his grace.

Religion is a personal matter, of love and trust. It is not a mere matter of believing sound doctrine. One may be a very zealot for the form of sound words in doctrine, as he may be exact in architecture, mathematics or rhetoric, and yet may not be spiritually affected and saved. One must do more than believe the truth about God. He must accept and trust God himself as he comes to him in the person of Jesus Christ. Without this one gets no good from the truth, whose main purpose is to make God known to us, so that we may know him, worship him, love and serve him.

We sing such hymns as, "I am trusting thee, Lord Jesus, trusting only thee," "I am thine, O Lord, I have heard thy voice,"

"I belong to Jesus," and "Jesus, lover of my soul, let me hide myself in thee"; and these are the true expressions of the faith that abides in the heart of the true child of God. Love is not a mere abstraction. It can not be. It exists only as one person loves another. It is found in its highest form as one loves God. Where this religious love is lacking out of the heart, the highest and holiest element of life is wanting. This is religion. This is life eternal. This is knowing the only true God and Jesus Christ whom he has sent.

DO WE WISH A REVIVAL?

From all directions come reports of seasons of refreshing, conversions and ingatherings into the Church. The old Gospel has not lost its power. It is still the means which God employs in the work of saving souls. Human beings need the Gospel to-day just as truly as they did a century or ten centuries ago. They are no more outgrowing their need of it than they are outgrowing their need for water and pure air. It is demanded by their spiritual natures as air and water and light are demanded by their bodies.

This age is not essentially different from all preceding ages. We have made some inventions and discoveries, and we know how to plow and sow and harvest more rapidly than our fathers did, and how to travel faster and farther, and how to shoot longer and larger guns, and how to make money more rapidly by means of trusts and combines; but these are only outside matters, as changes in the fashions of garments are external affairs. People have

worn clothes in other ages, and they have raised grain very well, and have traveled sufficiently, and have made war all too well. In all essential particulars people are today just what they always have been, with the same human needs and frailties. Underneath the coat of any cut or color is the throbbing physical heart, and under all the changing culture of all the ages is the universal need of the human soul for the grace and salvation of Christ.

To have a longing for the salvation of others is one of the marks of a renewed soul. The one who has no such desire is not a child of God. He is still unawakened, unsaved, a member of the kingdom of selfishness and sin and death. Those who have had an experience of the goodness of God, and who have come to know the joy of deliverance and hope, and who know the terrible future of those who are unsaved, are anxious that others may also be saved. This longing is impressed on their souls by the Holy Spirit. Each converted soul is commissioned to bring others to Christ.

When the sense of spiritual things is strong and clear in the heart of Christians,

as it is in a time of spiritual quickening or revival, there comes an unusually strong desire for the salvation of the unconverted. Let a church be really revived and souls will be sure to be saved. The tongues of Christians will be unloosed and they will speak plainly and lovingly, and invite others to come to Christ. It comes to be easy to do so at such times.

It is often a surprise to them too when they find that men and women are ready to respond to their invitations, and that it is easy to them to yield themselves to Christ. But when Christian people are themselves aroused they find that many persons are just ready to accept the Savior. The Holy Spirit is doing his work in both classes of hearts, and when a church is ready to receive others in the name of Christ, they will find them coming.

The two things most needed in any church where the Bible is believed and where the Gospel is preached are prayer and invitation. God is to be called on in prayer for his blessing on human hearts, and those around us are to be invited to come to God. We are to plead with God for the people, and with the people for God. Where one person is earnestly engaged in

both these, a revival is going on; when several are doing it, we shall find always that the church is having a mighty revival. If we long for a revival, we may have it.

God is ready to bless and glorify his church. He gives us oft-repeated assurances of his readiness to save. His promises may be relied on. They are yea, and in Christ Jesus they are amen. He is ready to open the windows of heaven and pour out a blessing that there shall not be room enough to receive. Each moment is the time of God's loving and gracious power. Let our prayer be to him and our dependence upon him. As we come prayerfully and trustfully to him in loving, Christian experience, worship, faith and service, he in his grace will send through us to others the mighty outpourings of his power to save.

